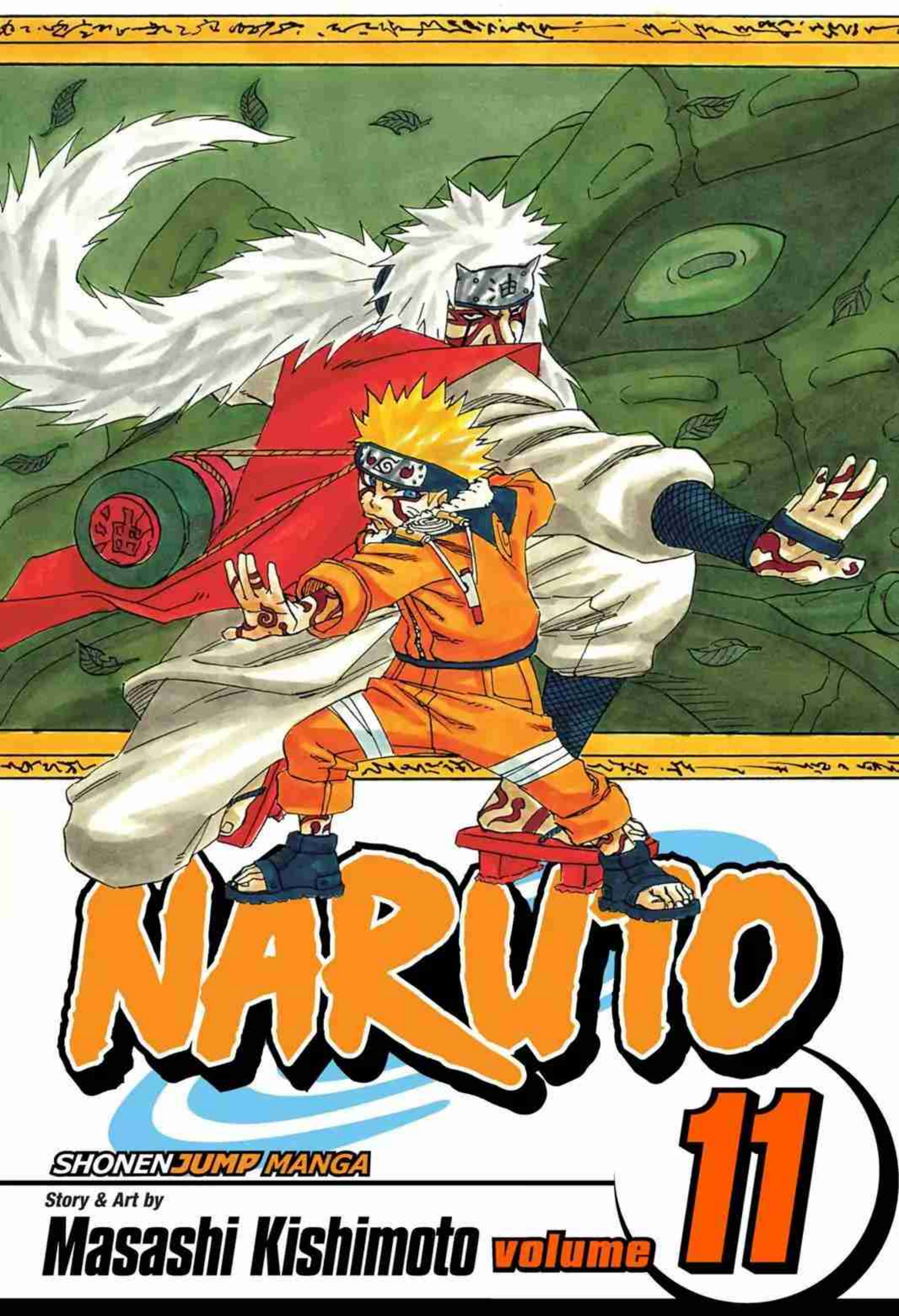
油
NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume 11

岸本斉史

Recently, my editor has been taking me out to really tasty eateries more and more often. I ate fugu (blowfish) for the first time in my life, and I've gotta tell you, it's real yummy, everybody! Next time, I want to spin my plate of fugu on top of my chopsticks before I eat it!

—*Masashi Kishimoto, 2002*

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

NARUTO VOL. 11
SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

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STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
NARUTO is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains partial nudity, tobacco use, and realistic and fantasy violence.

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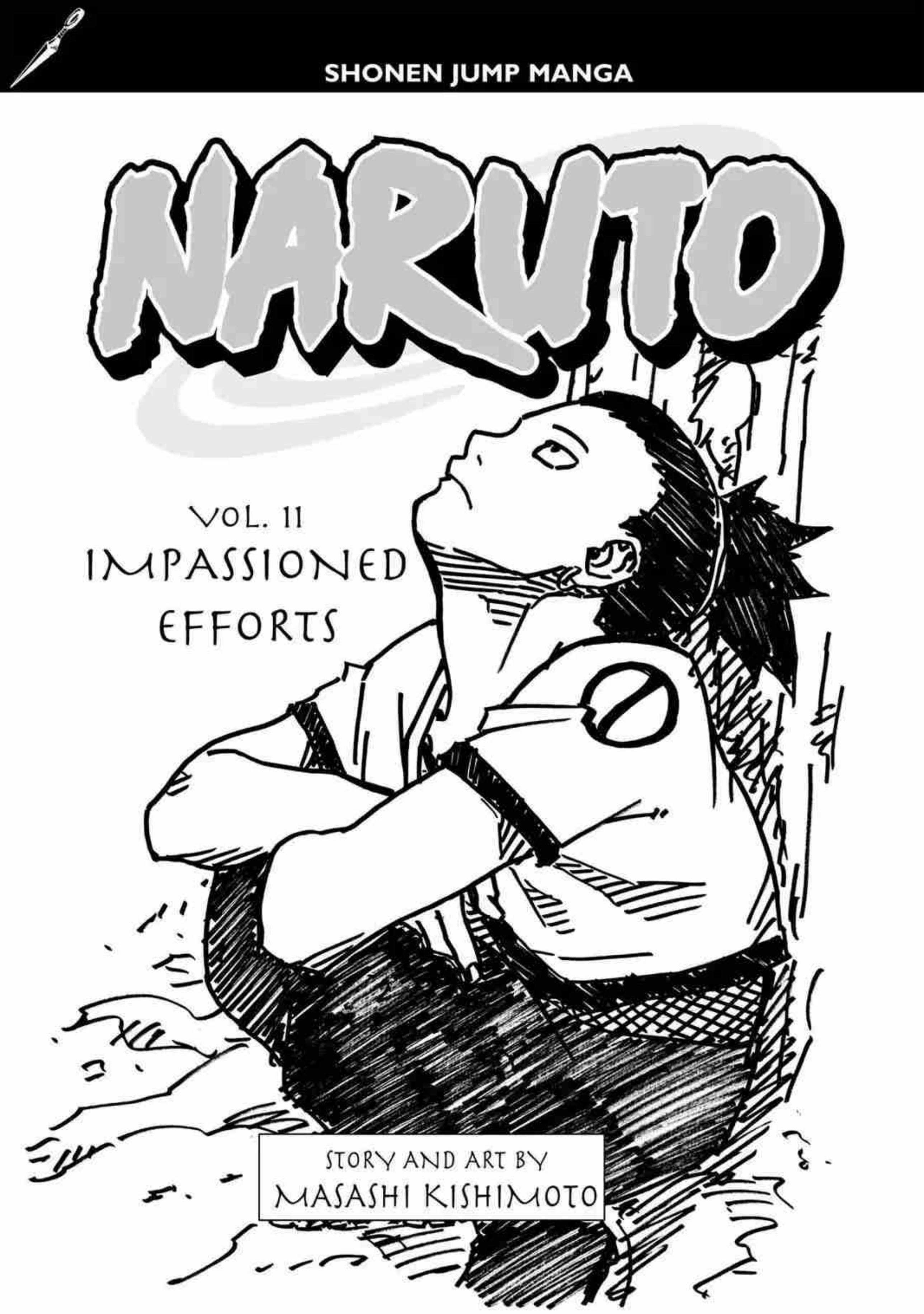
SHONEN JUMP MANGA

NARUTO

VOL. 11

IMPASSIONED EFFORTS



STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO

SAKURA サクラ

Smart and studious, Sakura is the brightest of Naruto's classmates, but she's constantly distracted by her crush on Sasuke. Her goal: to win Sasuke's heart!

NARUTO ナルト

When Naruto was born, a destructive fox spirit was imprisoned inside his body. Spurned by the older villagers, he's grown into an attention-seeking trouble-maker. His goal: to become the village's next *Hokage*.

SASUKE サスケ

The top student in Naruto's class, Sasuke comes from the prestigious Uchiha clan. His goal: to get revenge on a mysterious person who wronged him in the past.

Ebisu エビス

Once tutor to Konohamaru (the Honorable Grandson of the Hokage), Ebisu has now been assigned to train Naruto for the final phase of the Chûnin Exam.

Hayate ハヤテ

A jônin from Konohagakure and proctor of the third stage of the Chûnin Exam.

Baki バキ

Jônin leader of Gaara, Kankuro and Temari — the trio of ninja from Sunagakure (The Village Hidden in Sand).

Kakashi カカシ

Although he doesn't have an especially warm personality, Kakashi is protective of his students.

Orochimaru 大蛇丸

This nefarious master of disguise placed a mysterious curse-mark on Sasuke and hopes to mold Sasuke into his successor.

Kabuto カブト

A spy for Orochimaru's village of Otogakure (The Village Hidden in the Sound), Kabuto has been living a double life in Konohagakure since childhood.

THE STORY SO FAR...

Twelve years ago, a destructive nine-tailed fox spirit attacked the ninja village of Konohagakure. The *Hokage*, or village champion, defeated the fox by sealing its soul into the body of a baby boy. Now that boy, Uzumaki Naruto, has grown up to become a ninja-in-training, learning the art of *ninjutsu* with his teammates Sakura and Sasuke.

Nine candidates — including Naruto and Sasuke — have made it past the preliminary rounds of the third Chûnin Exam, and they begin a month-long period of preparation for the finals. Meanwhile, Orochimaru orders Kabuto to kidnap Sasuke…but Kakashi catches Kabuto in the act. Although Sasuke is safe, Kabuto escapes — but not before his true identity is revealed. Now training with elite tutor Ebisu, Naruto practices a water-walking exercise at the local hot spring. But when a peeping tom and a giant toad knock out his instructor, what's Naruto to do?!

NARUTO

VOL. 11
IMPASSIONED EFFORTS

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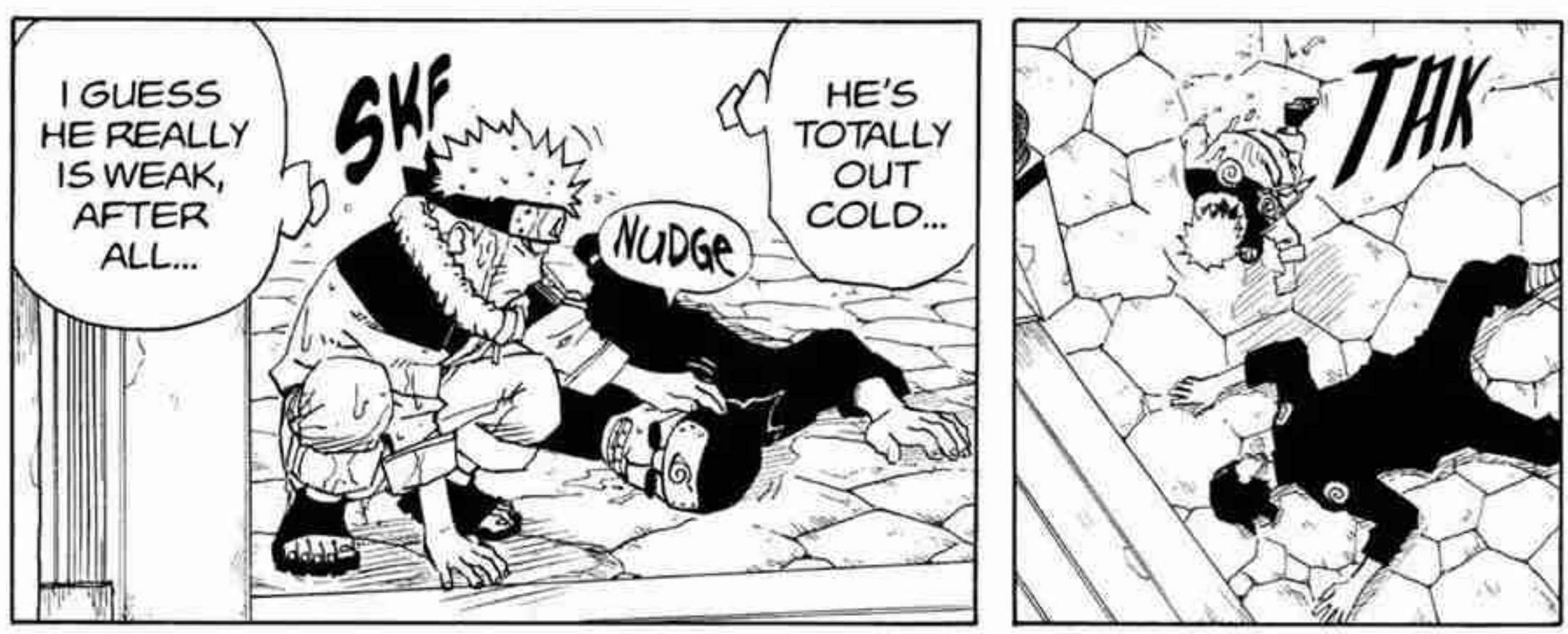
Number 91: Make Me Your Disciple?!

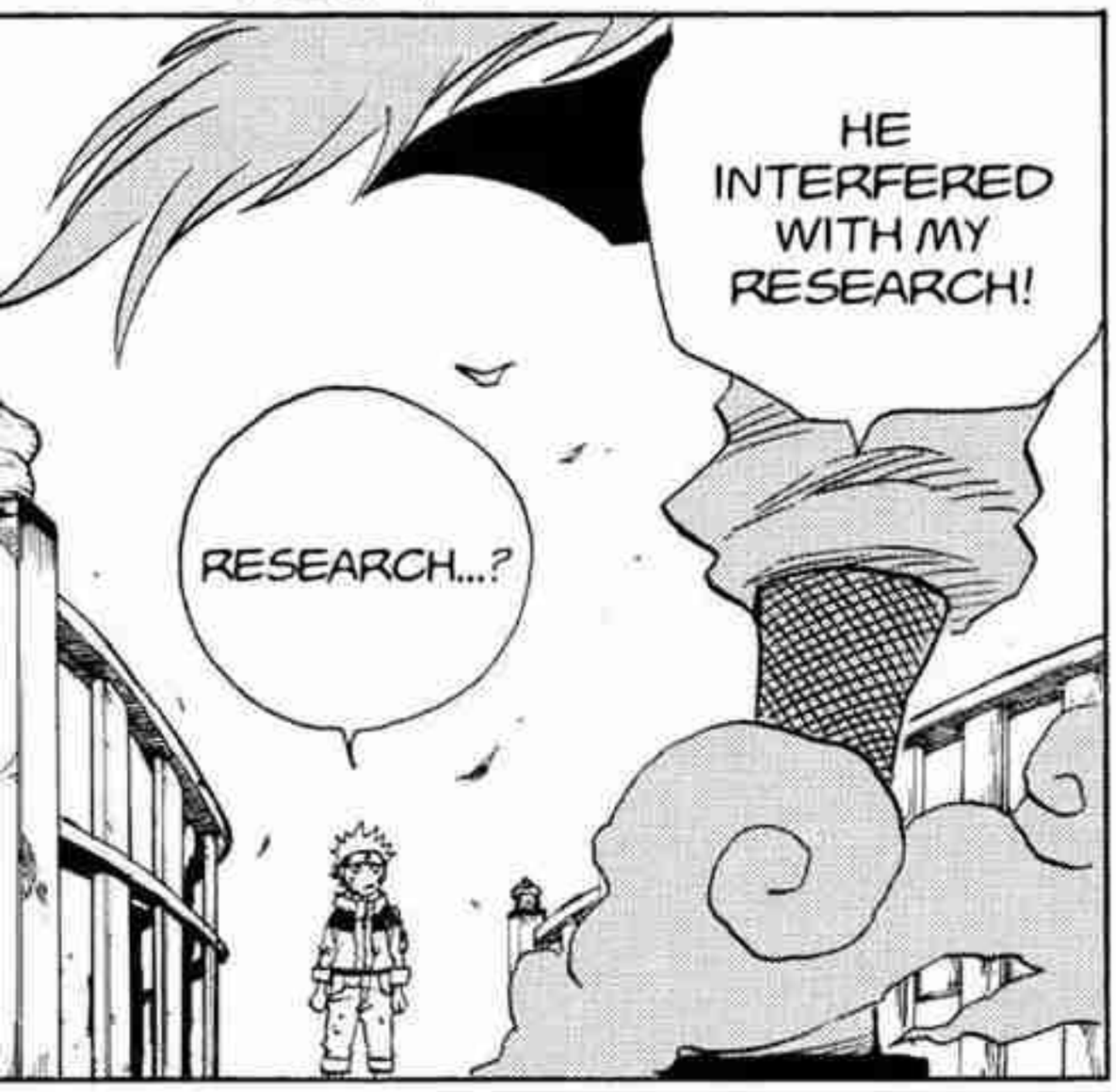


GOOD QUESTION!

I AM THE MOST HOLY HERMIT SAGE OF THE MOUNT MYOBOKU TOADS, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE TOAD SAGE. PLEASED TO MEET YA!!

WAIT JUST A MINUTE THERE!!

Number 91: Make Me Your Disciple?!


HE INTERFERED WITH MY RESEARCH!
RESEARCH...?

HEY, YOU! PERVY SAGE! WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT HIM, HUH?
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO OVERSEE MY TRAINING...
CLACK
...BUT YOU KNOCKED HIM OUT!

DIG
DIG
I'M A WRITER... I WRITE NOVELS...!

MAKE-OUT PARADISE
...LIKE THIS ONE!

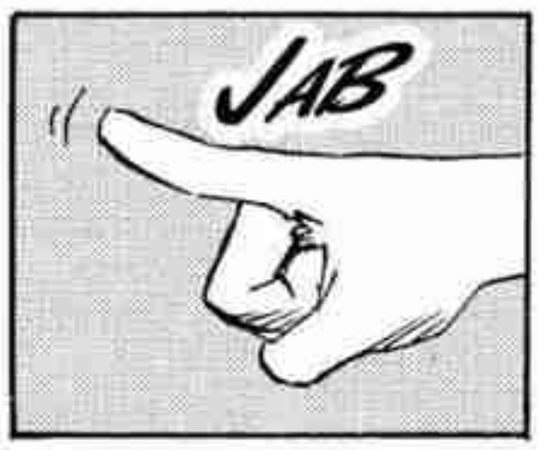
IT'S GOTTEN QUITE FAMOUS!
MAKE-OUT PARADISE
OH! YOU'VE HEARD OF IT?

HEH HEH
MAKE-OUT PARADISE
THAT'S--!
OH--!

SCOWL JAB

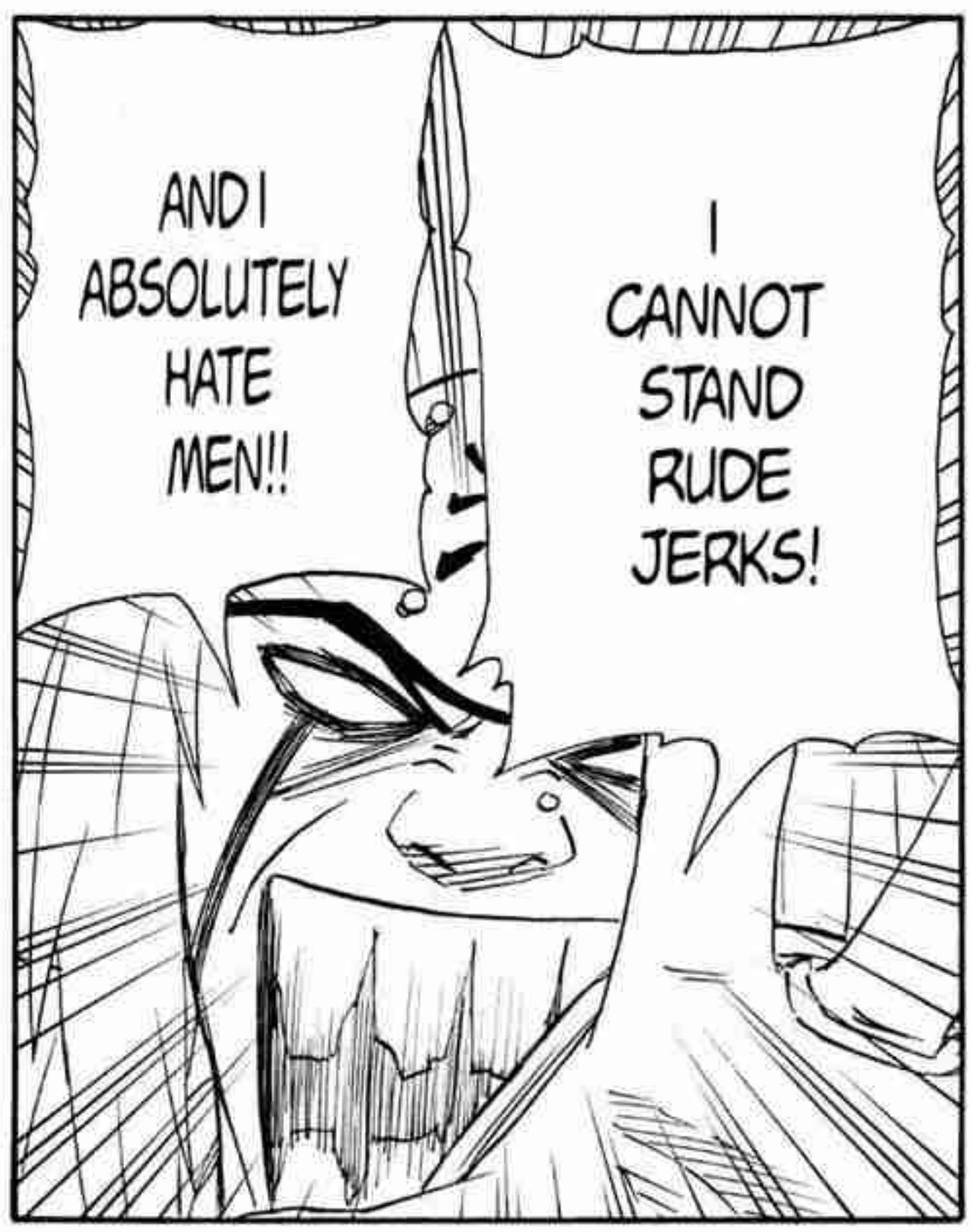
IT'S A DIRTY BOOK! IT'S INDECENT!

YES, I HAVE HEARD OF IT!!



...AND TAKE OVER AS THE SUPERVISOR OF MY TRAINING!

THEN DO YOUR DUTY...



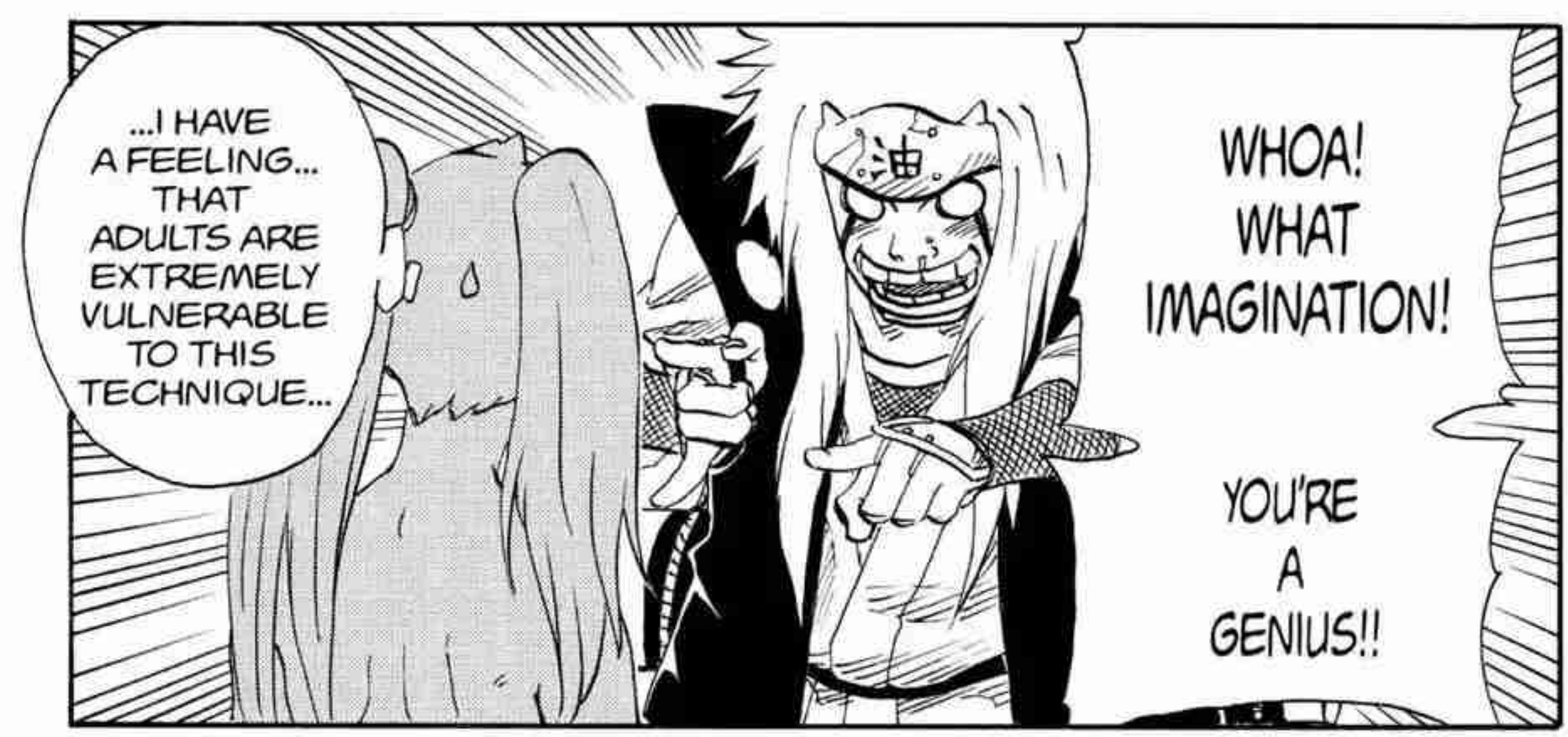
HOW DO YOU LIKE ME NOW? ♡

TAKE THIS!!

NINJA CENTERFOLD!!!

I CALL IT NINJA CENTER-FOLD, BUT...
ER...

WH... WHAT'S THIS TECHNIQUE CALLED?!
YOU'RE MY TYPE OF GAL!
EH?! WELL?!

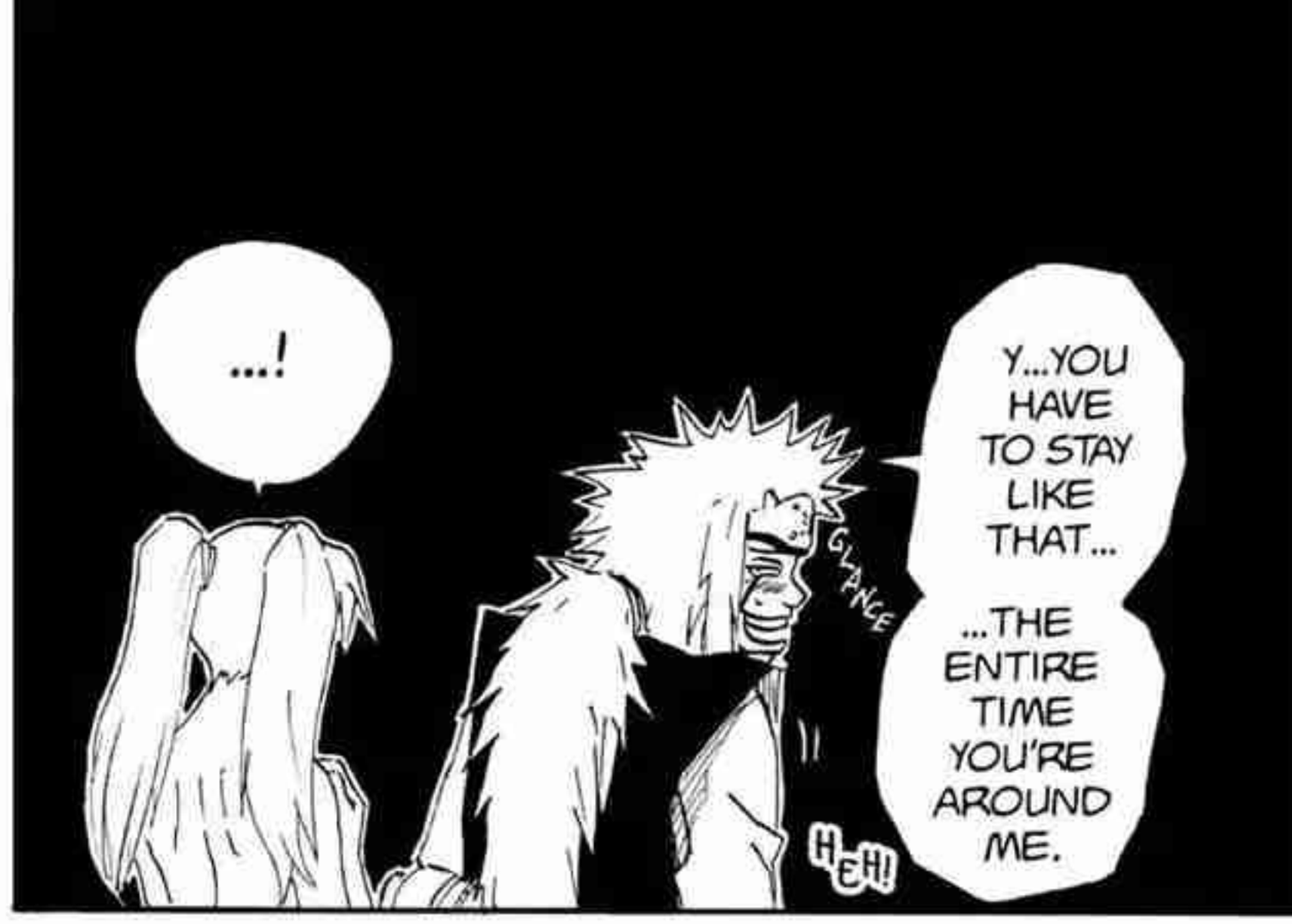

...I HAVE A FEELING... THAT ADULTS ARE EXTREMELY VULNERABLE TO THIS TECHNIQUE...
WHOA! WHAT IMAGINATION!
YOU'RE A GENIUS!!

...WHAT IS IT?
ONE CONDI-TION...?

BUT THERE'S ONE CONDI-TION.
YUP!
THEN YOU'LL OVERSEE MY TRAINING...?
SPARKLE

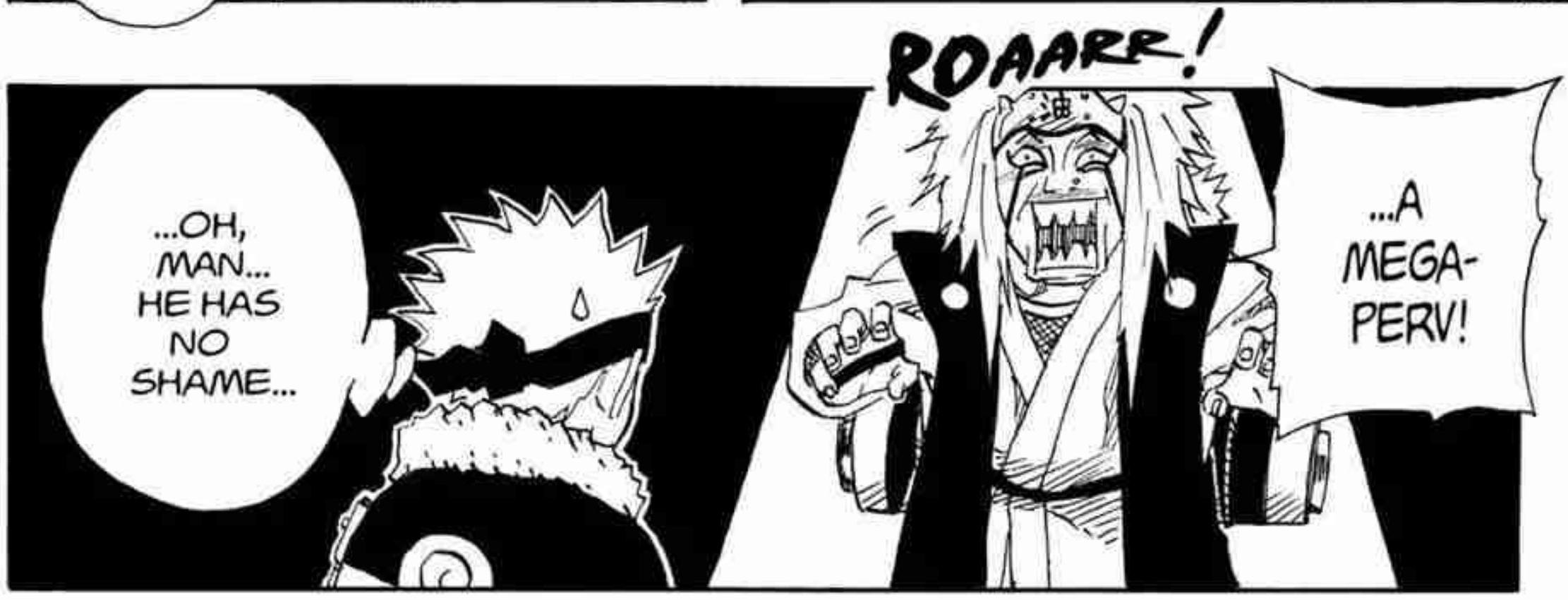
...
?
TWIRL

BOOF


...!
Y...YOU HAVE TO STAY LIKE THAT...
...THE ENTIRE TIME YOU'RE AROUND ME.
GLANCE
HEH!

I AM NO ORDINARY PERVERT!
NO, YOU'RE WRONG!
WHAT?! DON'T MESS AROUND...
I AM...

YOU ARE JUST A PLAIN OLD PERVERT, YOU PERVY SAGE!!
"INSPIRATION," MY BUTT!
OH!


ROAARR!
...OH, MAN... HE HAS NO SHAME...
...A MEGA-PERV!

KIDDO...
TRY THAT DRILL AGAIN.
FLEX
FLEX
BUT... ALL JOKING ASIDE...
I'LL SUPERVISE YOUR TRAINING.

YES SIR--!!
DASH

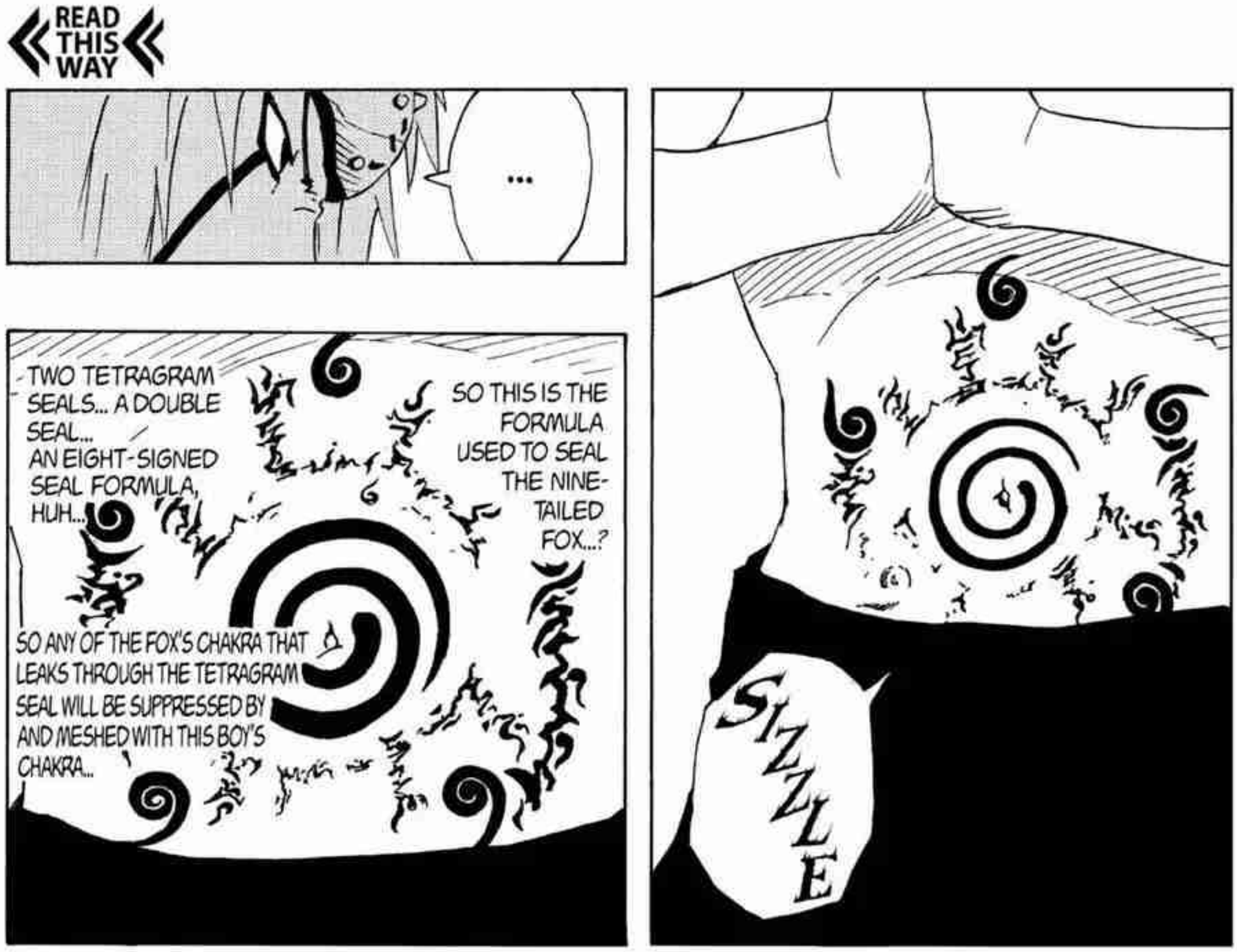
SLOSH SLOSH
ACK...
WHOA THERE...

FWUP
HMPH!!
SPLISH

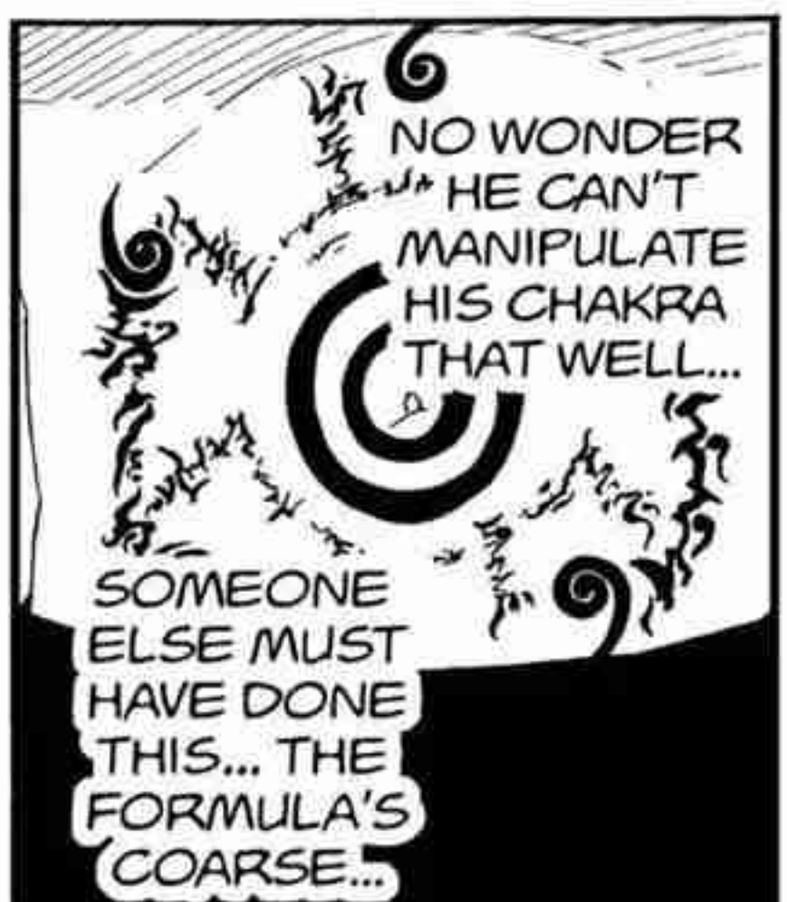
HM!
!

SPLOOSH

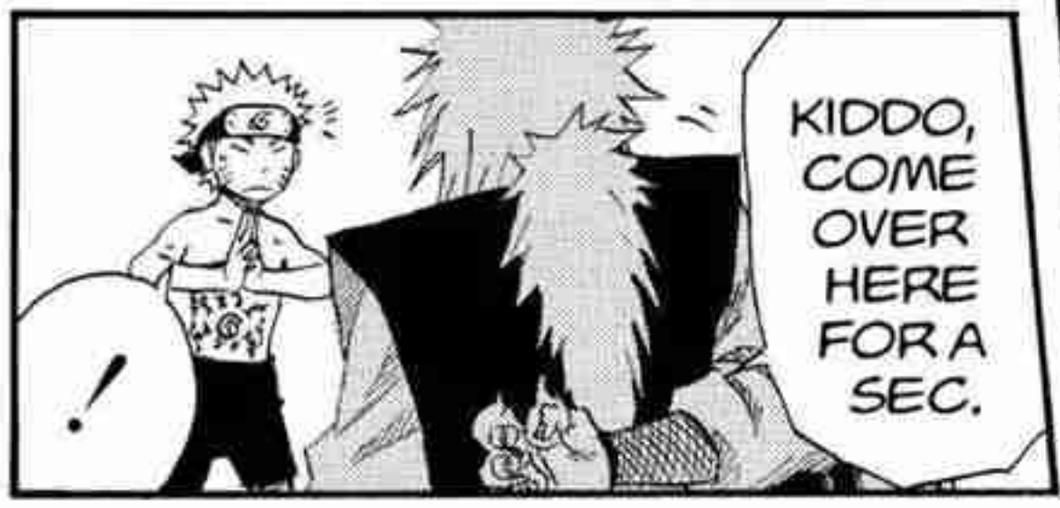
YEOWCH!

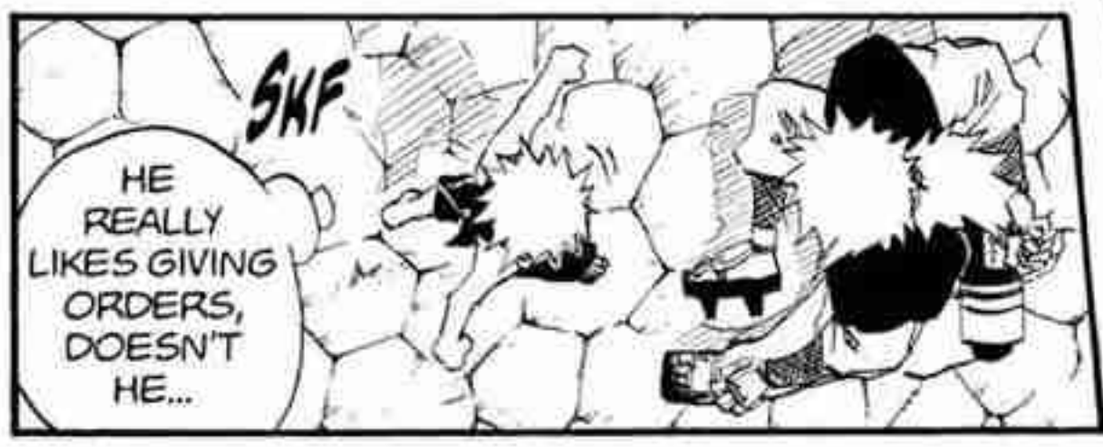

READ THIS WAY
...
TWO TETRAGRAM SEALS... A DOUBLE SEAL... AN EIGHT-SIGNED SEAL FORMULA, HUH...
SO THIS IS THE FORMULA USED TO SEAL THE NINE-TAILED FOX...?
SO ANY OF THE FOX'S CHAKRA THAT LEAKS THROUGH THE TETRAGRAM SEAL WILL BE SUPPRESSED BY AND MESHED WITH THIS BOY'S CHAKRA...
SIZZLE

...FOR THIS BOY'S PROTECTION.
THE FOURTH HOKAGE... HE DID IT...


NO WONDER HE CAN'T MANIPULATE HIS CHAKRA THAT WELL...
SOMEONE ELSE MUST HAVE DONE THIS... THE FORMULA'S COARSE...

THIS KID'S CHAKRA AND THE FOX'S CHAKRA ARE MIXING TOGETHER IN AN UNSTABLE WAY...
AN ODD-NUMBERED SEAL PLACED ON TOP OF AN EVEN-NUMBERED SEAL...?
HOWEVER... SINCE THEN, IT'S BEEN BLOCKED BY A FIVE-PRONGED SEAL.


KIDDO, COME OVER HERE FOR A SEC.
!


SKF
HE REALLY LIKES GIVING ORDERS, DOESN'T HE...

SHF
RAISE YOUR ARMS UP, LIKE, "BANZAI!"
WH... WHAT FOR?!

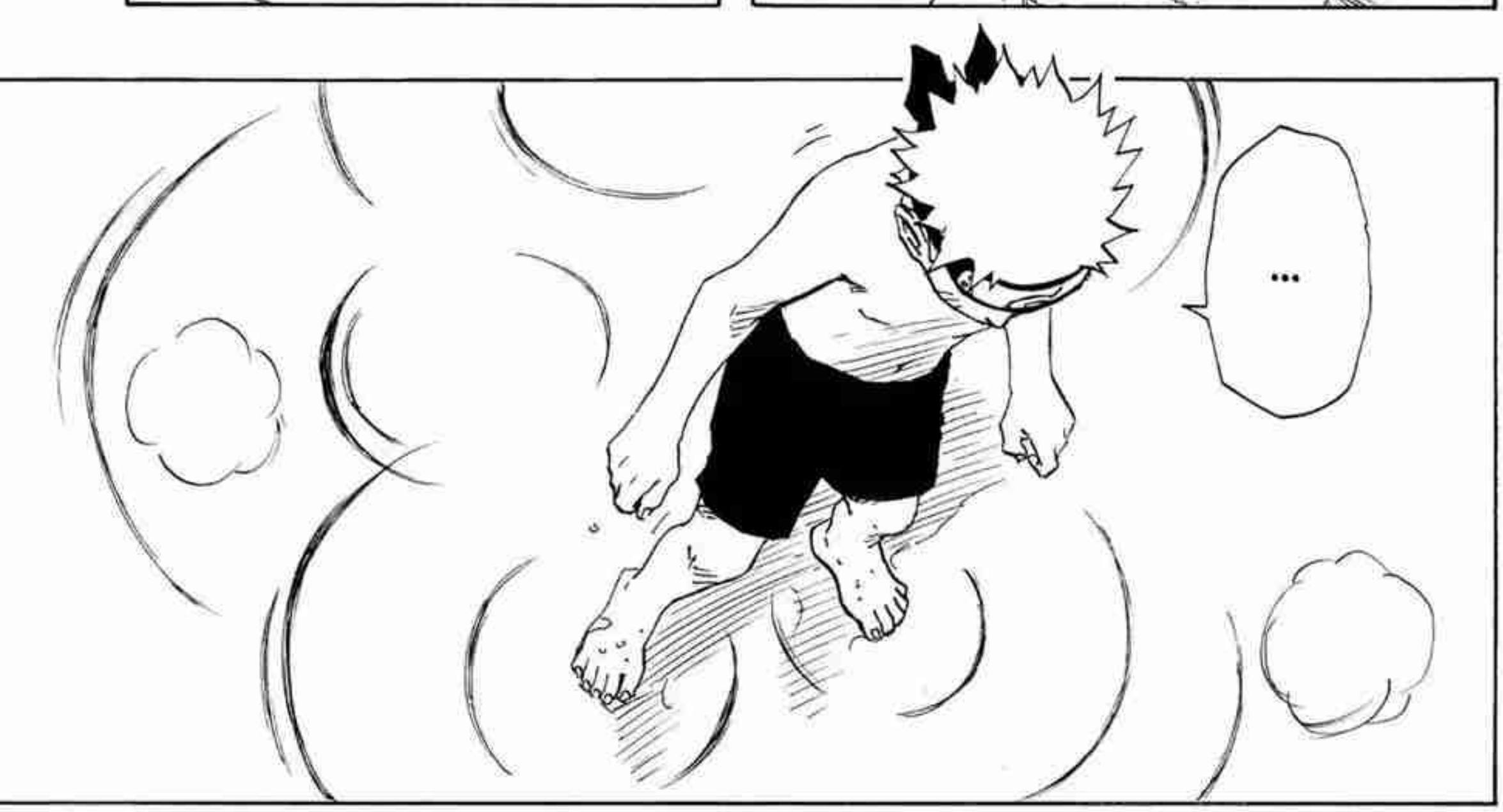
...I'D BET IT WAS OROCHIMARU.
HMPH... IF I HAD TO GUESS...
POOM
POOM
POOM
POOM
!!!
FIVE-PRONGED SEAL RELEASE!!

FWSH
FWSH
FWSH
FWSH

?!

SPLISH

I STIMULATED SOME RELAXATION POINTS FOR YOU.
WH...WHY THE HECK DID YOU DO THAT?!
TWITCH TWITCH
JUST GO OVER THERE AND TRY WALKING ON WATER ONE MORE TIME... OKAY?


...

...THAT YOU LEARN HOW TO CONTROL THE FOX'S CHAKRA...
...IT'S ABOUT TIME...

GRIN

THIS IS AWE-SOME!
HUH? I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT...!

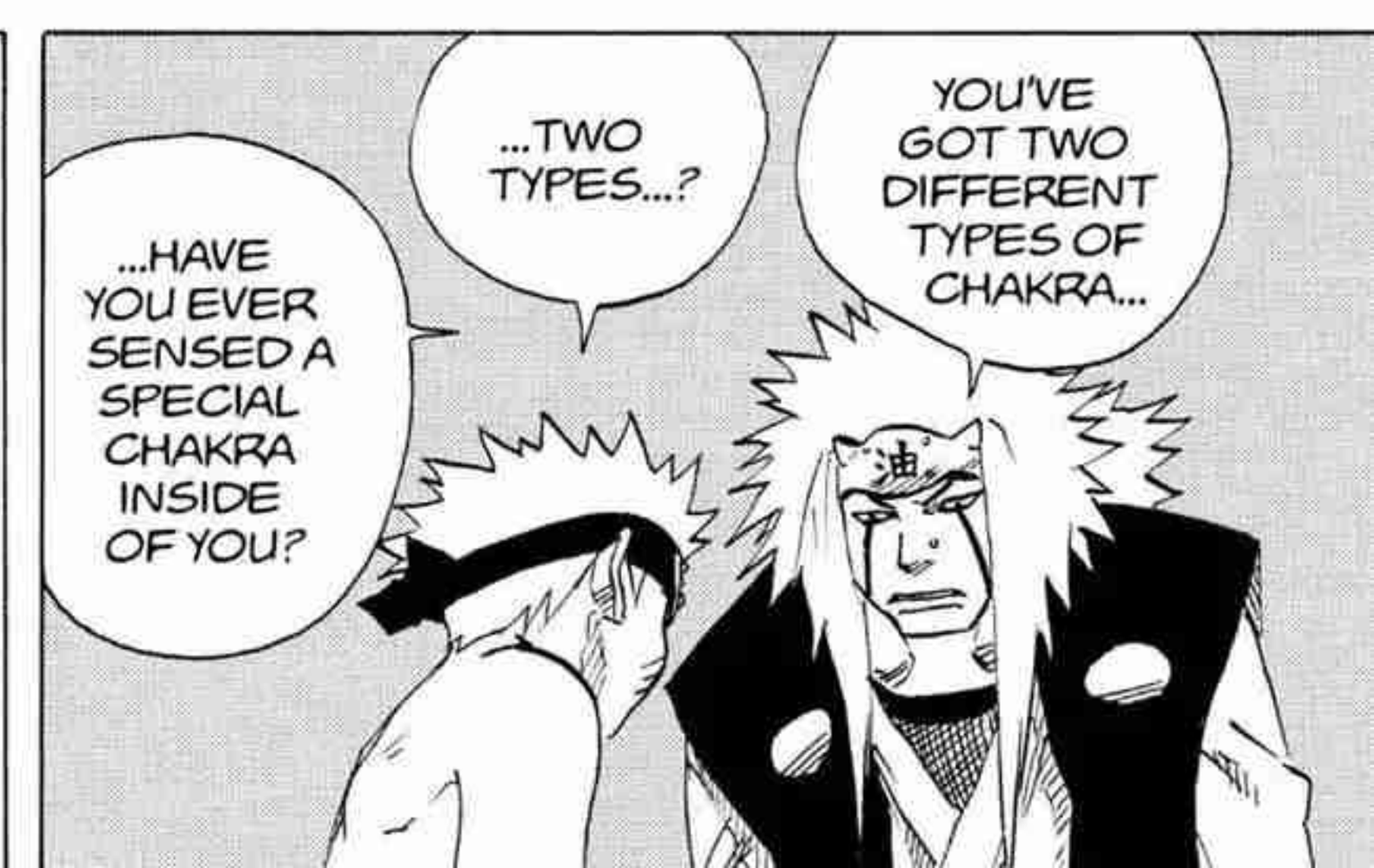
!
TWIRL
I'LL TEACH YOU A SUPER-SPECIAL MOVE!
ALL RIGHT, KIDDO! GET OVER HERE!

C'MON! WHAT IS IT?!

WAHOO!
SPLISH
SPLISH

?
FIRST, BEFORE WE GO ON...
...THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND.

HMM...


...HAVE YOU EVER SENSED A SPECIAL CHAKRA INSIDE OF YOU?
...TWO TYPES...?
YOU'VE GOT TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAKRA...

READ THIS WAY
I SEE...
BUT...
!
...BUT I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT IT.
...NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I THINK THERE WERE A FEW TIMES...
...WHEN I FELT A FLOOD OF CHAKRA, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN I HAD INCREDIBLE STRENGTH...
...IF I THINK ABOUT IT AS COLORS... IF MY USUAL CHAKRA IS YELLOW, THIS ONE WAS RED OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE, BUT...
...I DO REMEMBER THAT IT FELT DIFFERENT FROM THE CHAKRA THAT I USUALLY MANIPULATE...
COME HERE AGAIN TOMORROW, OKAY...?
ALL RIGHT, IT'S GETTING LATE. LET'S LEAVE THE FUN FOR TOMORROW...
I'LL TAKE THIS GUY TO THE PLACE WHERE I'M STAYING...
HUH...?
GOOD, GOOD...!

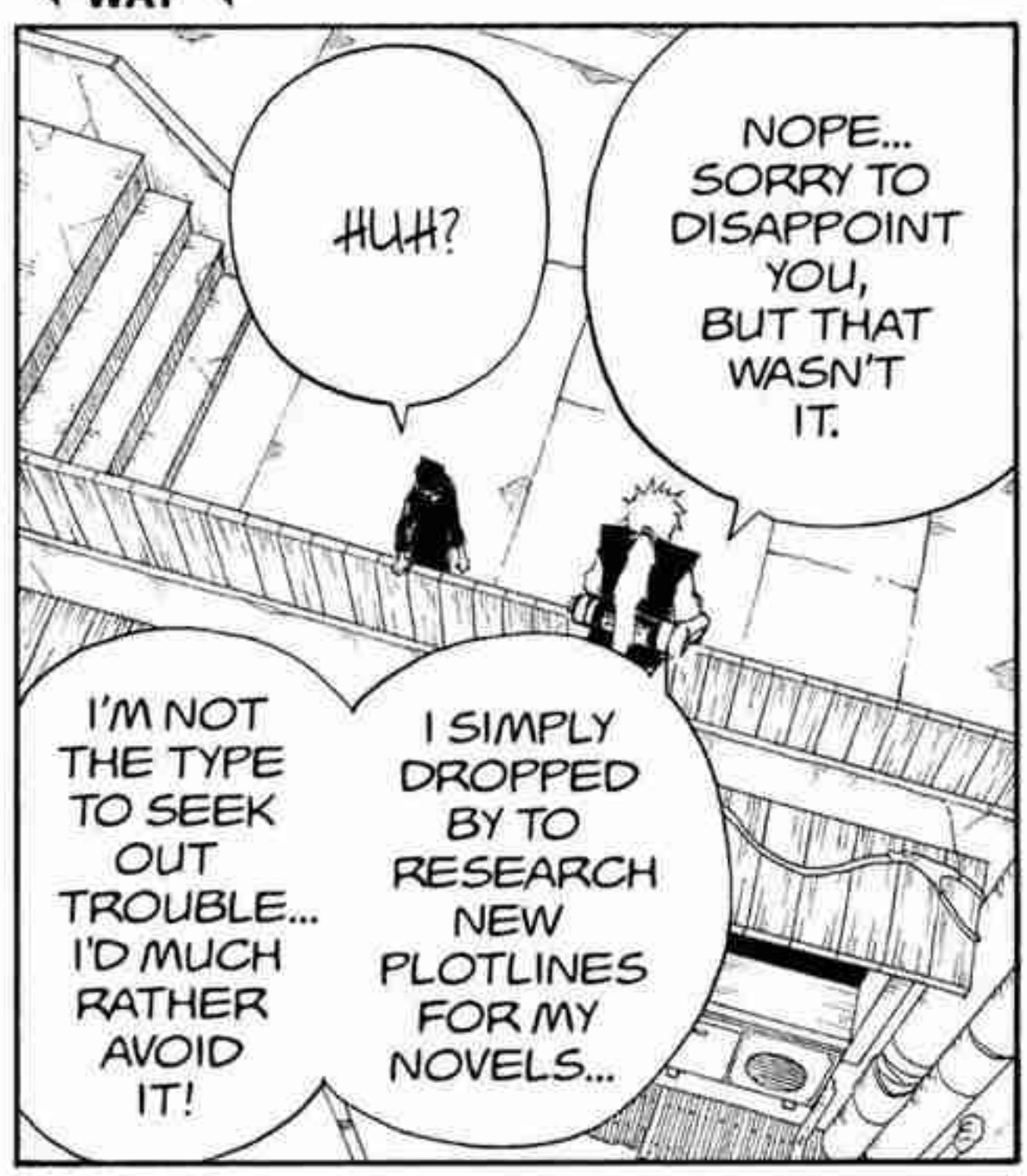
READ THIS WAY
I WAS PLANNING TO ATTACK YOU WHILE YOU SLEPT...
I GIVE UP... DO YOU NEVER SLEEP?
...WHAT DO YOU WANT...?
...SO I CAN INCREASE MY CHANCES OF GETTING TO FIGHT SASUKE IN THE CHÛNIN EXAM... SINCE I'M THE ONLY SOUND NINJA LEFT.
...BUT I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO FIGHT YOU LIKE THIS...
WHEN THE FULL MOON IS OUT... ITS BLOOD STIRS UP...
I'VE SEEN AND ANALYZED YOUR SAND ATTACKS...
LET'S SEE WHICH ONE'S QUICKER, YOUR SAND OR MY SOUND.
...

WH... WHAT THE...?
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU...?!

RUMBLE
!!

OH, NOT AT ALL! NEVER MIND THAT...
FORGIVE ME, EBISU... I'VE STOLEN YOUR PUPIL FROM YOU...
I'M JUST SURPRISED. LORD HOKAGE HAD ASKED US TO SEARCH FOR YOUR WHEREABOUTS... NO ONE HAD FOUND ANY SIGN OF YOU, AND YET... YOU WERE RIGHT HERE ALL ALONG!

READ
THIS
WAY


HUH?
NOPE... SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, BUT THAT WASN'T IT.
I'M NOT THE TYPE TO SEEK OUT TROUBLE... I'D MUCH RATHER AVOID IT!
I SIMPLY DROPPED BY TO RESEARCH NEW PLOTLINES FOR MY NOVELS...

...
...DID YOU RETURN BECAUSE OF OROCHIMARU...?

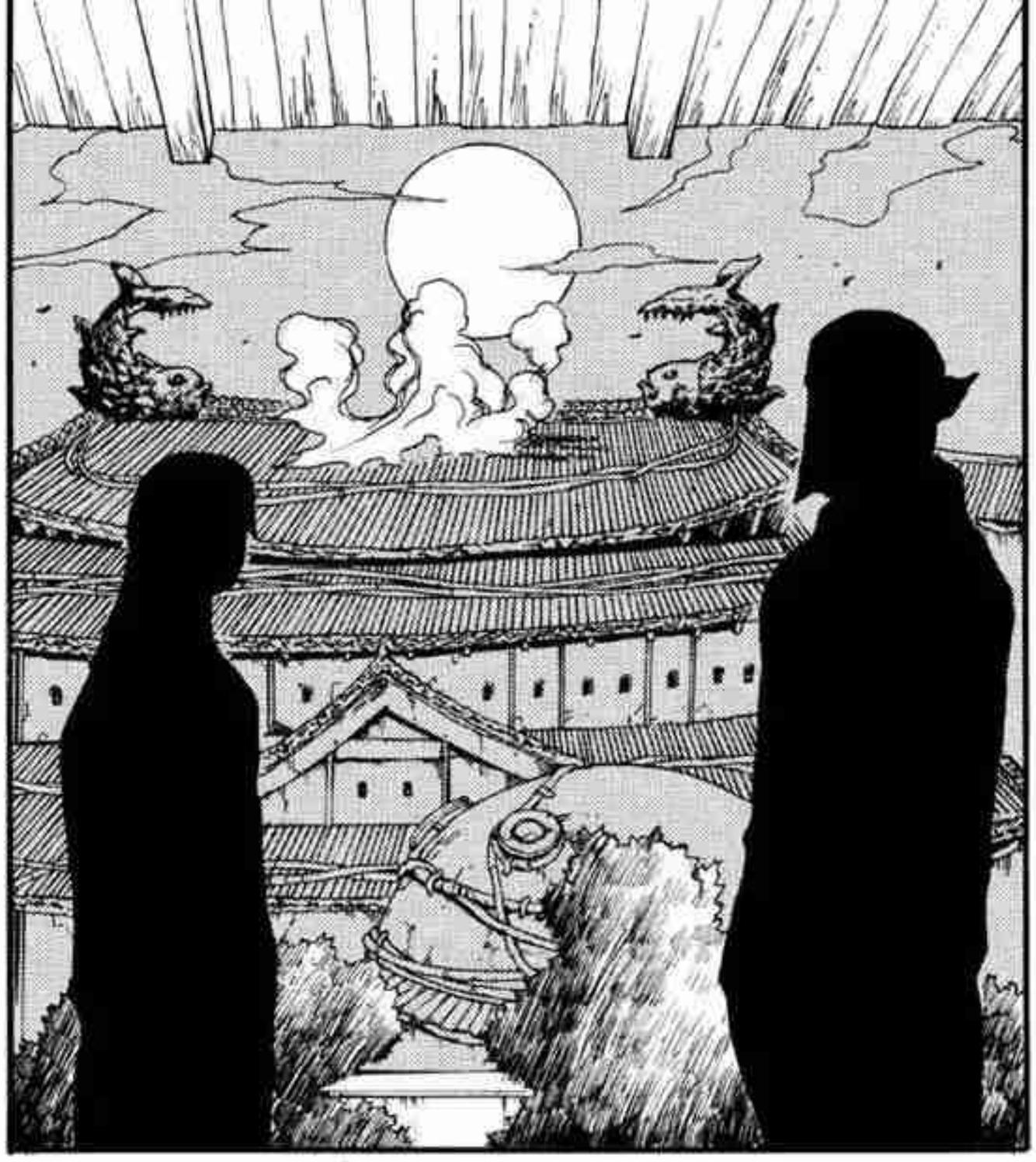
...THAT IN ORDER TO STOP OROCHIMARU, TOUTED AS ONE OF THE THREE GREAT NINJA...
BUT...! YOU OUGHT TO UNDERSTAND BETTER THAN ANYONE...

...!!
GRR

...YOU, LORD JIRAIYA!!!
...IT WOULD TAKE THE HELP OF ANOTHER FROM THAT SAME TRIO...

...WHAT IS IT?
ONE CONDI-TION...?

Number 92: Konoha vs. Sound vs. Sand...!! zz



BUT... WHY DO YOU SEEM PLEASED? HIS VICTIM WAS ONE OF YOUR SOUND NINJA...
IMPRESSIVE, ISN'T IT? SO THAT IS HIS TRUE IDENTITY...

IT'S ALL RIGHT. HE FULFILLED HIS PURPOSE LONG AGO.

HUF
HUF

WHY IS KABUTO...
...TALKING WITH THAT SAND NINJA...?!
I THOUGHT HE WAS A GUINEA PIG TO TEST THE STRENGTH OF THAT SASUKE KID.
...

READ THIS WAY

... WHAT ...?!

OH NO, THERE'S NO LONGER ANY NEED FOR THAT...
...IN FACT, I'VE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN THE ORDER TO CAPTURE SASUKE...
BUT I MADE A... MINOR MISCALC-ULATION... HA HA...

YES... THEY KNOW I'M A SOUND AGENT NOW.

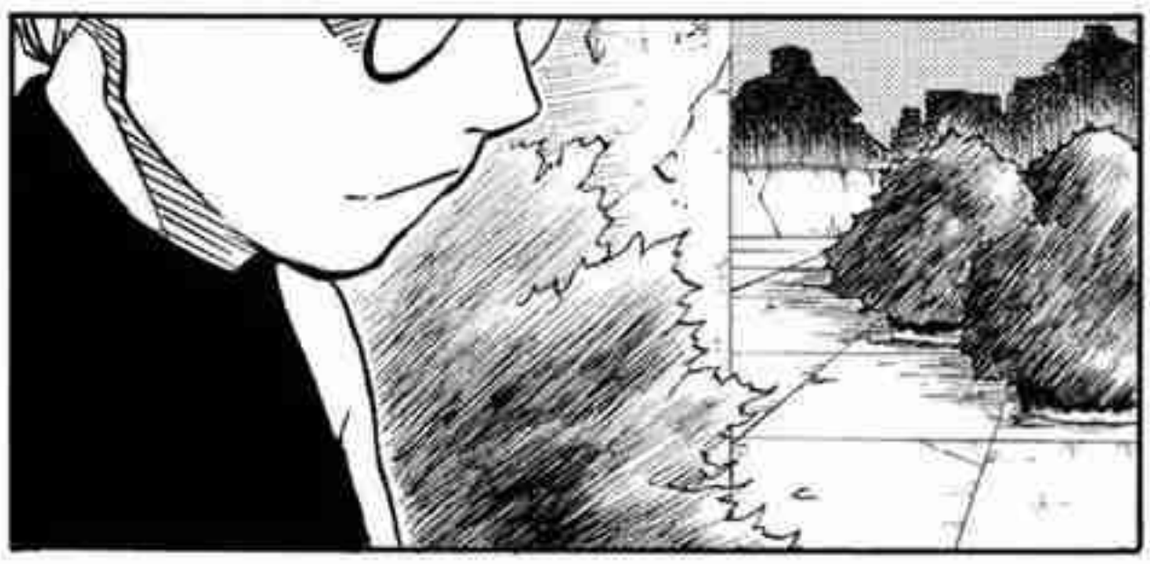
...EVERY-THING ELSE WE'VE PLANNED... IT WILL ALL COME TO NAUGHT!
IF THEY DISCOVER THAT WE'RE SECRETLY MEETING HERE, THE PLOT TO DESTROY KONOHA AND...
THEN...

YOU ARE QUITE THE FOOL.
NONCHALANTLY COMING TO MEET WITH ME DESPITE HAVING BEEN FOUND OUT BY KONOHA...
YOU KNOW... I HEARD YOU WERE OROCHIMARU'S RIGHT-HAND MAN, BUT...

...

AND EVEN AFTER THAT, I STILL HAVE A PLAN TO KIDNAP SASUKE.
I WANTED TO SEE WHAT THE REACTION FROM KONOHA WOULD BE...
YOU SOUND NINJA ARE THE ONES WHO PROPOSED THIS SCHEME TO US IN THE FIRST PLACE... BUT IF YOU ALL CONTINUE WITH THESE BLUNDERS, WE'LL BE FORCED TO WITHDRAW OUR SUPPORT.

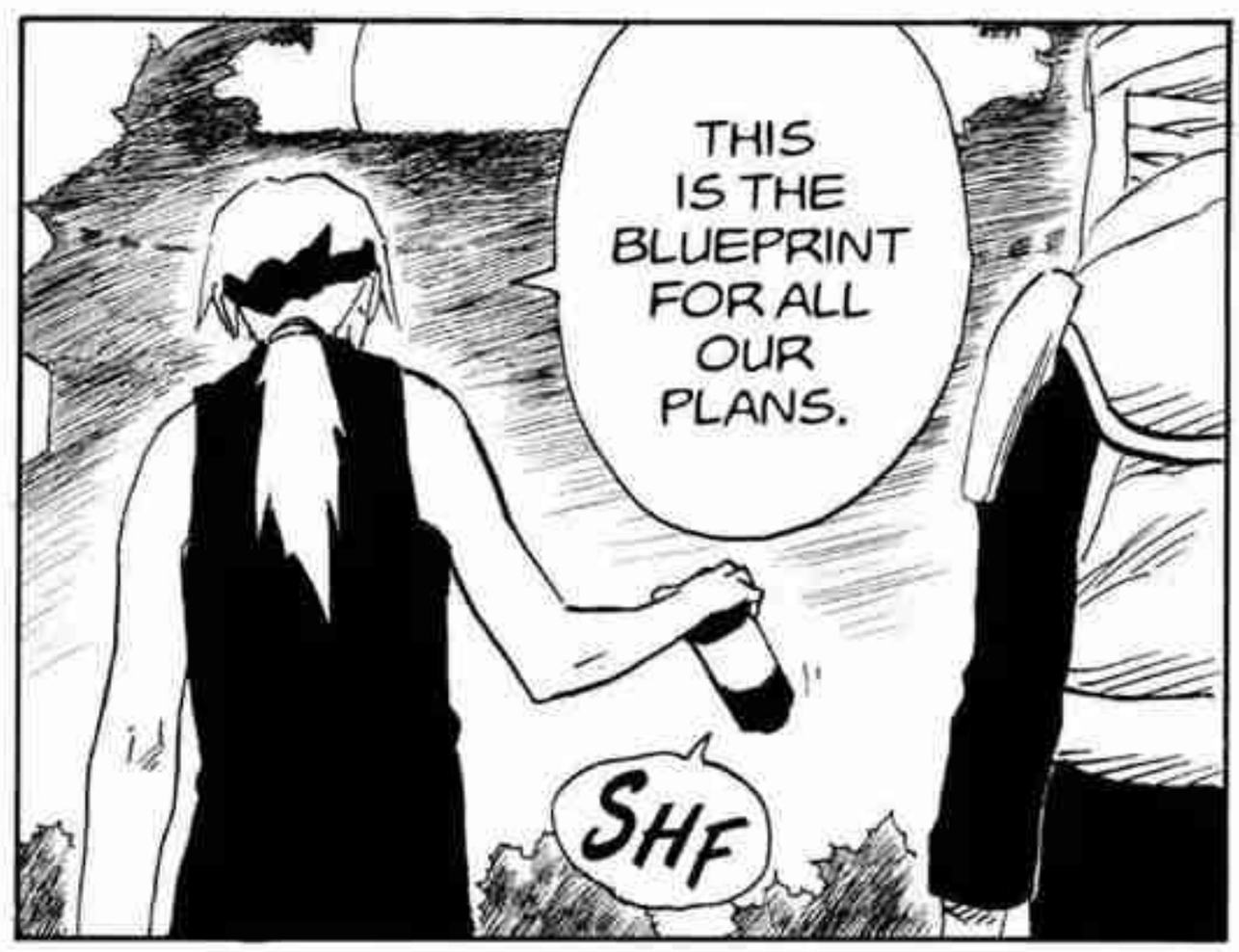
...I WASN'T FOUND OUT.
ACTU-ALLY... TRUTH BE TOLD...
I DELIBERATELY REVEALED MYSELF TO THEM...



SAND WILL NOT MAKE OUR MOVE UNTIL THE VERY END.
THAT IS LORD KAZEKAGE'S WILL.

WHAT AM I HEARING...?!
...

SO...


THIS IS THE BLUEPRINT FOR ALL OUR PLANS.
SHF

...TO YOUR SUBORDI-NATES... PLEASE.
...PASS THE INFORMA-TION ALONG SOON...

I'VE GOT TO LET LORD HOKAGE KNOW RIGHT AWAY...!
CRUNCH

...OUR SUPPOSED ALLY, SUNAGAKURE...
...IS ALREADY IN LEAGUE WITH SOUND...!!

SURE...
WELL, I'M DONE HERE...

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE CLEANUP...

OH... AND ONE MORE THING...

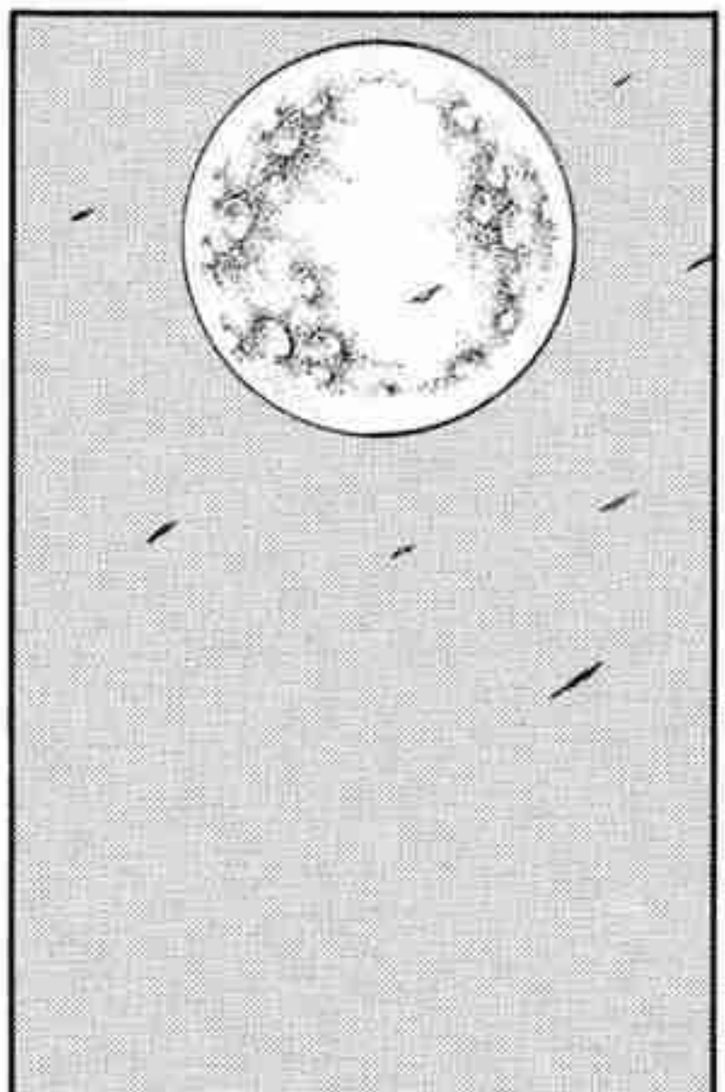
...AS A GESTURE OF OUR ALLEGIANCE. THE LEAST WE SAND NINJA CAN DO IS LEND A HELPING HAND.

BESIDES...

NO... I'LL DO IT...

...IS NO BIG DEAL.

ONE LITTLE MOUSE...

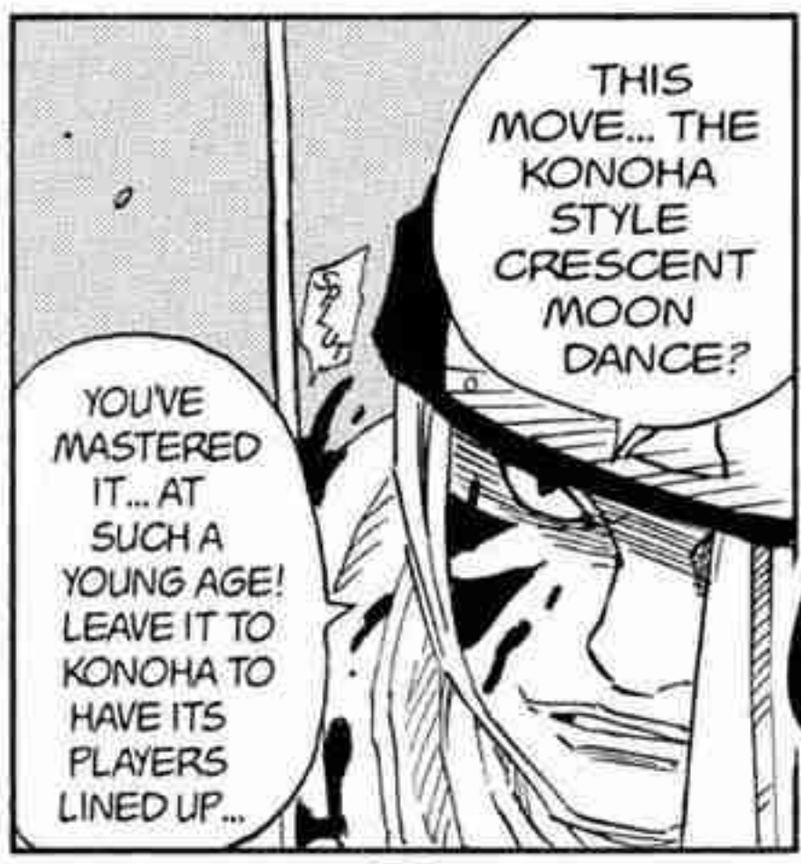


TAK

TAK

KONOHA STYLE: MIKAZUKI NO MAI! CRESCENT MOON DANCE!

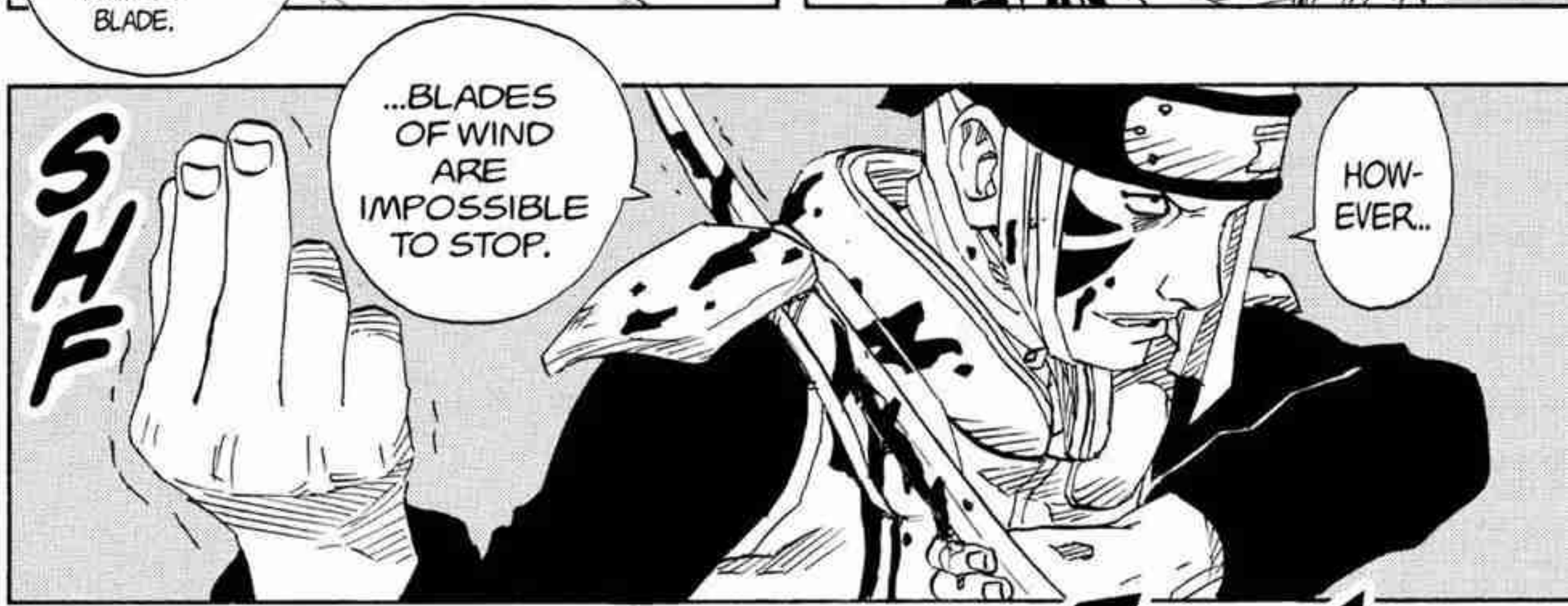
!!


THIS MOVE... THE KONOHA STYLE CRESCENT MOON DANCE?
YOU'VE MASTERED IT... AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE! LEAVE IT TO KONOHA TO HAVE ITS PLAYERS LINED UP...

SHLIK

YOUR BLADE WORK IS BRIL-LIANT...
BUT IT'S A SIMPLE, OBVIOUS TASK TO HALT A PHYSICAL BLADE.
WHAT...? I CAN'T PULL MY BLADE OUT...

CLAMP

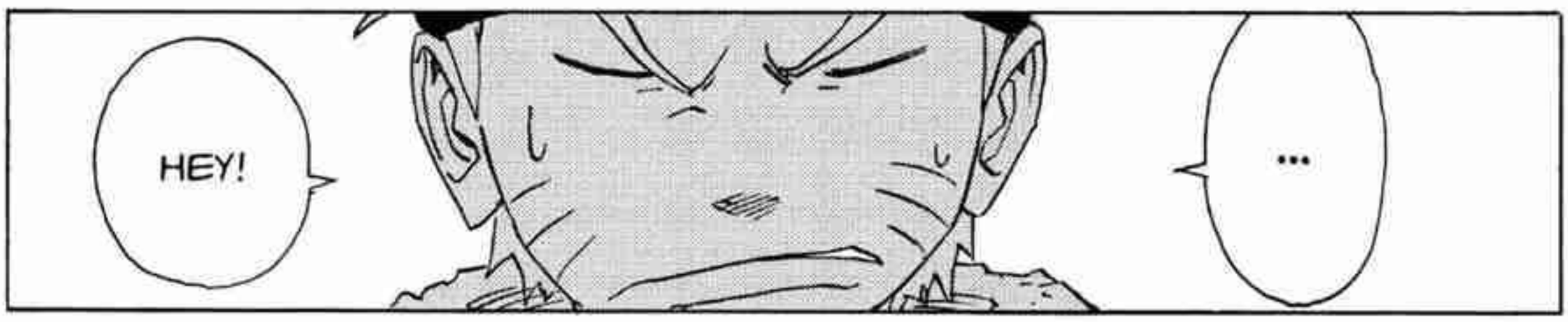

SHF
...BLADES OF WIND ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO STOP.
HOW-EVER..

WHAT THE...?!
...!!

SLASH

FWOOSH
WHEE!
WHEE!

FWOOSH


HEY!
...

HURRY UP AND SHOW ME THE MOVE!
ARE YOU REALLY GONNA TEACH ME ANYTHING?!
POUT

HEY! C'MON! I'M OVER HERE! EYES ON ME, PERVY SAGE!!
NOW...
I'M GOING TO INSTRUCT YOU IN THIS MOVE.

YOU KNOW, YOU WERE SAYING YOU HAD A YELLOW CHAKRA AND A RED CHAKRA.
...
...DO YOU REMEMBER THE TALK WE HAD YESTERDAY ABOUT THE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAKRA?
BEFORE I SHOW YOU...

...TRY TO MANIPULATE THAT RED CHAKRA RIGHT NOW.
THEN... GO AHEAD...

HMPH! THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY...
...BUT ...ALL RIGHT. I'LL TRY.

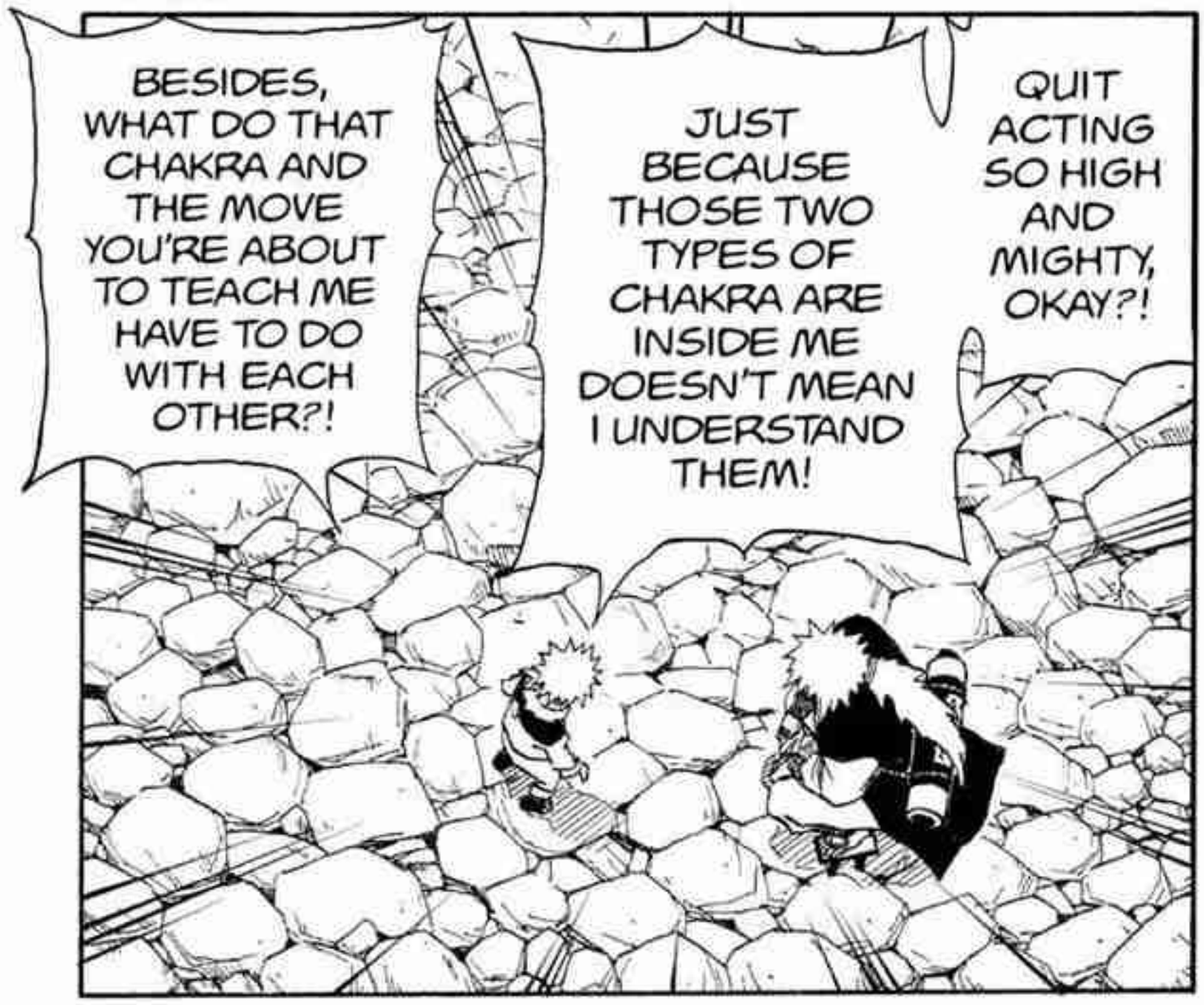
YOU SAID YOU SENSED A RED CHAKRA THE TIMES YOU EXERTED ENORMOUS STRENGTH, RIGHT?
YEAH... I THINK SO...

OH!
YEAH!
WHAT ABOUT IT?

HRM!

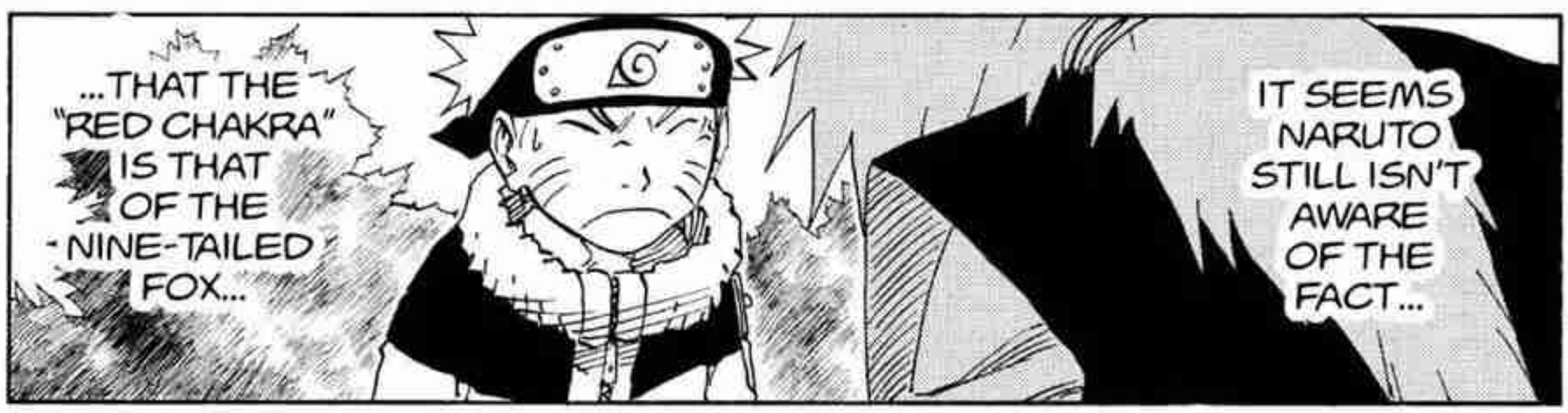
...I CAN ONLY SENSE THE SAME OLD CHAKRA AS ALWAYS!
NOPE.
UNH...

...WELL?


BESIDES, WHAT DO THAT CHAKRA AND THE MOVE YOU'RE ABOUT TO TEACH ME HAVE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER?!
JUST BECAUSE THOSE TWO TYPES OF CHAKRA ARE INSIDE ME DOESN'T MEAN I UNDERSTAND THEM!
QUIT ACTING SO HIGH AND MIGHTY, OKAY?!

SHEESH, YOU'VE GOT NO TALENT, DO YOU...

...


...THAT THE "RED CHAKRA" IS THAT OF THE NINE-TAILED FOX...
IT SEEMS NARUTO STILL ISN'T AWARE OF THE FACT...

LISTEN UP, KIDDO!
!

...IT SEEMS THE STIMULI THAT CALL UP THE FOX'S CHAKRA ARE LIFE-THREATENING DANGER AND ROILING EMOTIONS.
WELL, INFERRING FROM WHAT NARUTO HAS SAID...

THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE TO DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO, AT ANY TIME, DRAW ON AND USE...

...THE GIGANTIC OTHER CHAKRA THAT'S BEEN SLEEPING INSIDE YOU ALL YOUR LIFE.

THE MOVE I'M ABOUT TO TEACH YOU REQUIRES WAY MORE CHAKRA THAN YOU CURRENTLY POSSESS ON YOUR OWN!

NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF IT WOULD BE LIKE IGNORING A GIFT FROM ABOVE.

AND THIS WAY, YOU WON'T HAVE TO DO THE SAME EXERCISES AS THE OTHERS!

IN ANY CASE... THAT SPECIAL CHAKRA INSIDE YOU CAN BECOME YOUR GREATEST WEAPON.

JAB

HOW DID YOU KNOW I HAD THIS OTHER CHAKRA, ANYWAY?

?

WELL, I AM A POWERFUL SAGE...

...LEARNING HOW TO CONTROL AND THUS PRESERVE YOUR CHAKRA SO YOU DON'T OVEREXTEND YOURSELF.

UP 'TIL NOW, YOUR TRAINING HAS FOCUSED ON SUSTAINING OR RELEASING A SET AMOUNT OF CHAKRA...

EACH OF US HAS OUR OWN PERSONAL STYLE.

EVERYONE HAS HIS OWN STRENGTHS AND WEAK-NESSES.

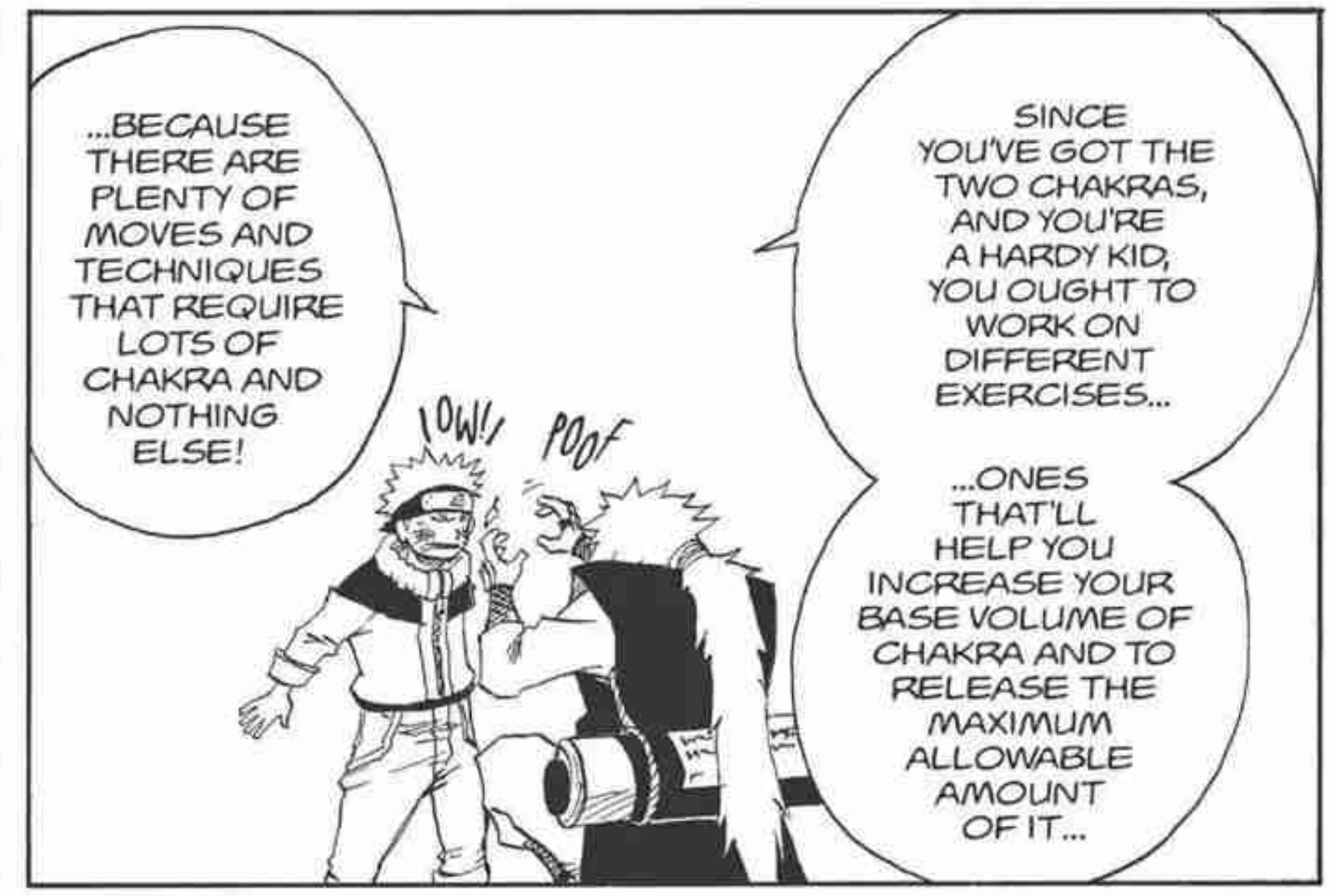
TUG

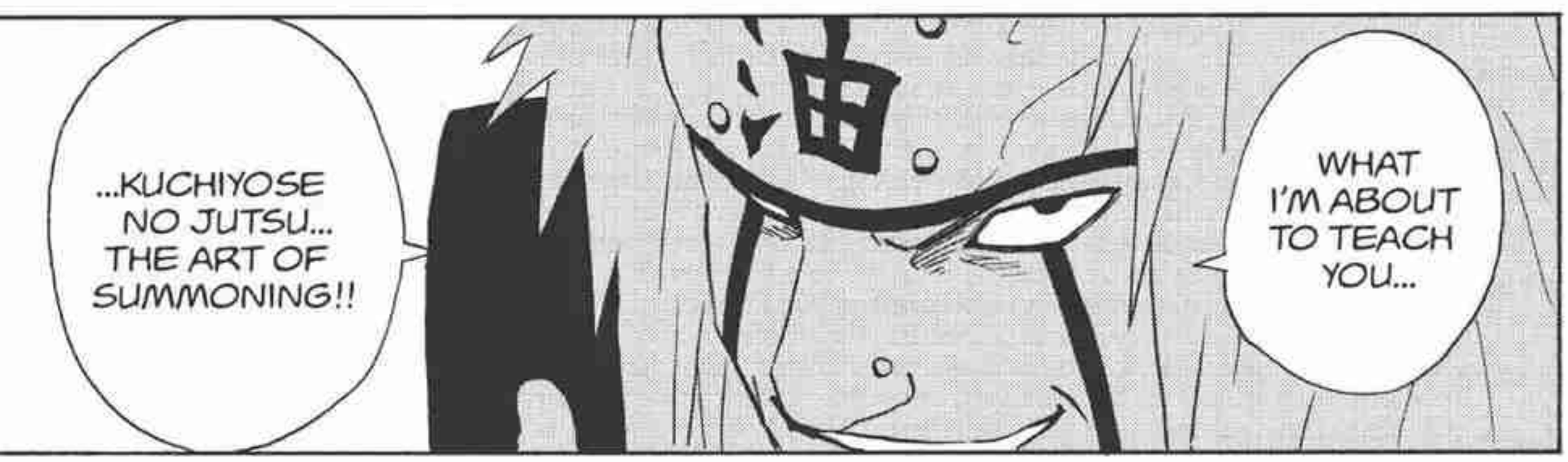
TUG

...SO YOU CAN JUST USE YOUR POWER INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT FINESSE.

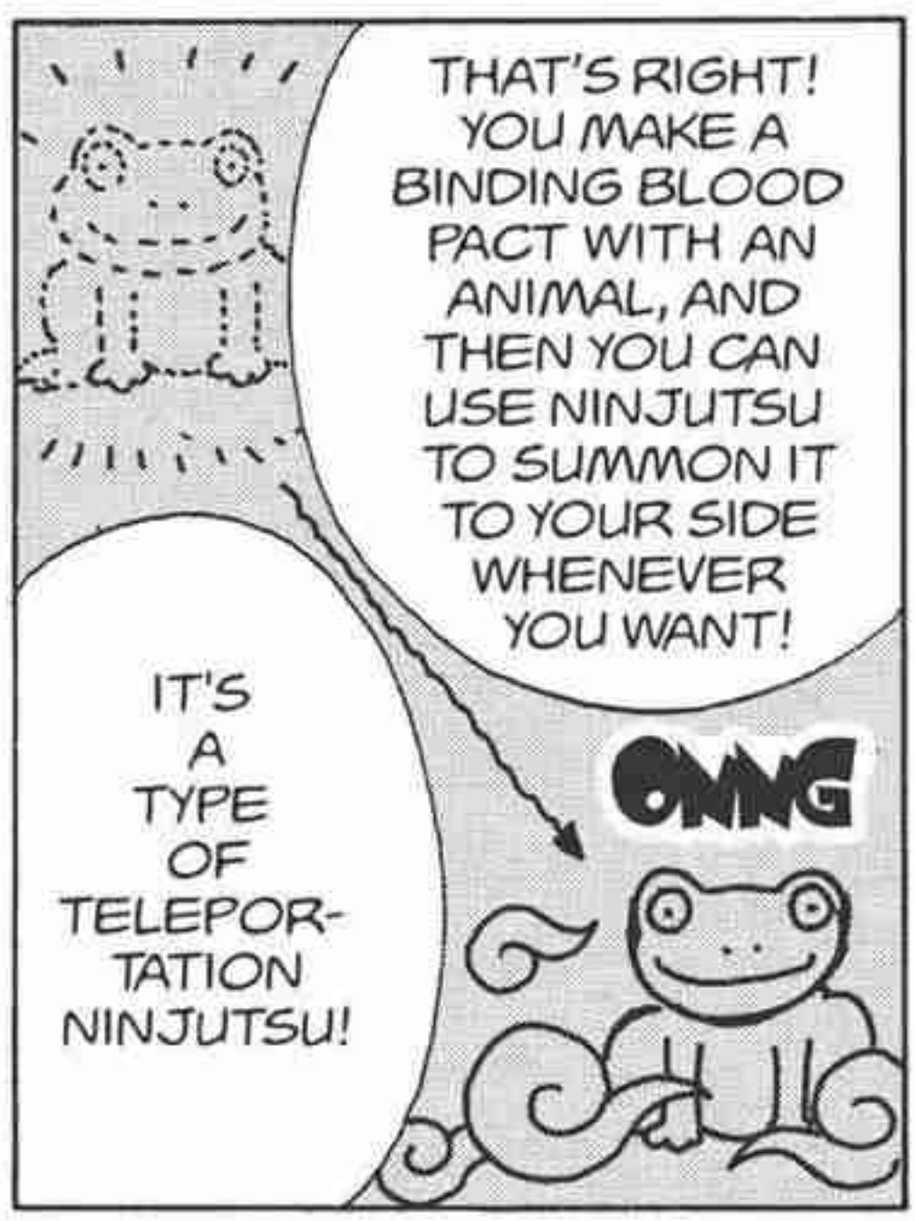
BUT YOUR STAMINA IS INCREDIBLE...

RUB
RUB
SUCH AS?


...BECAUSE THERE ARE PLENTY OF MOVES AND TECHNIQUES THAT REQUIRE LOTS OF CHAKRA AND NOTHING ELSE!
OW!
POOF
SINCE YOU'VE GOT THE TWO CHAKRAS, AND YOU'RE A HARDY KID, YOU OUGHT TO WORK ON DIFFERENT EXERCISES...
...ONES THAT'LL HELP YOU INCREASE YOUR BASE VOLUME OF CHAKRA AND TO RELEASE THE MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE AMOUNT OF IT...


...KUCHIYOSE NO JUTSU... THE ART OF SUMMONING!!
WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TEACH YOU...

WHOA... SOUNDS PRETTY COOL!
QUICK! C'MON, TEACH IT TO ME!


THAT'S RIGHT! YOU MAKE A BINDING BLOOD PACT WITH AN ANIMAL, AND THEN YOU CAN USE NINJUTSU TO SUMMON IT TO YOUR SIDE WHENEVER YOU WANT!
IT'S A TYPE OF TELEPORTATION NINJUTSU!
OMNG

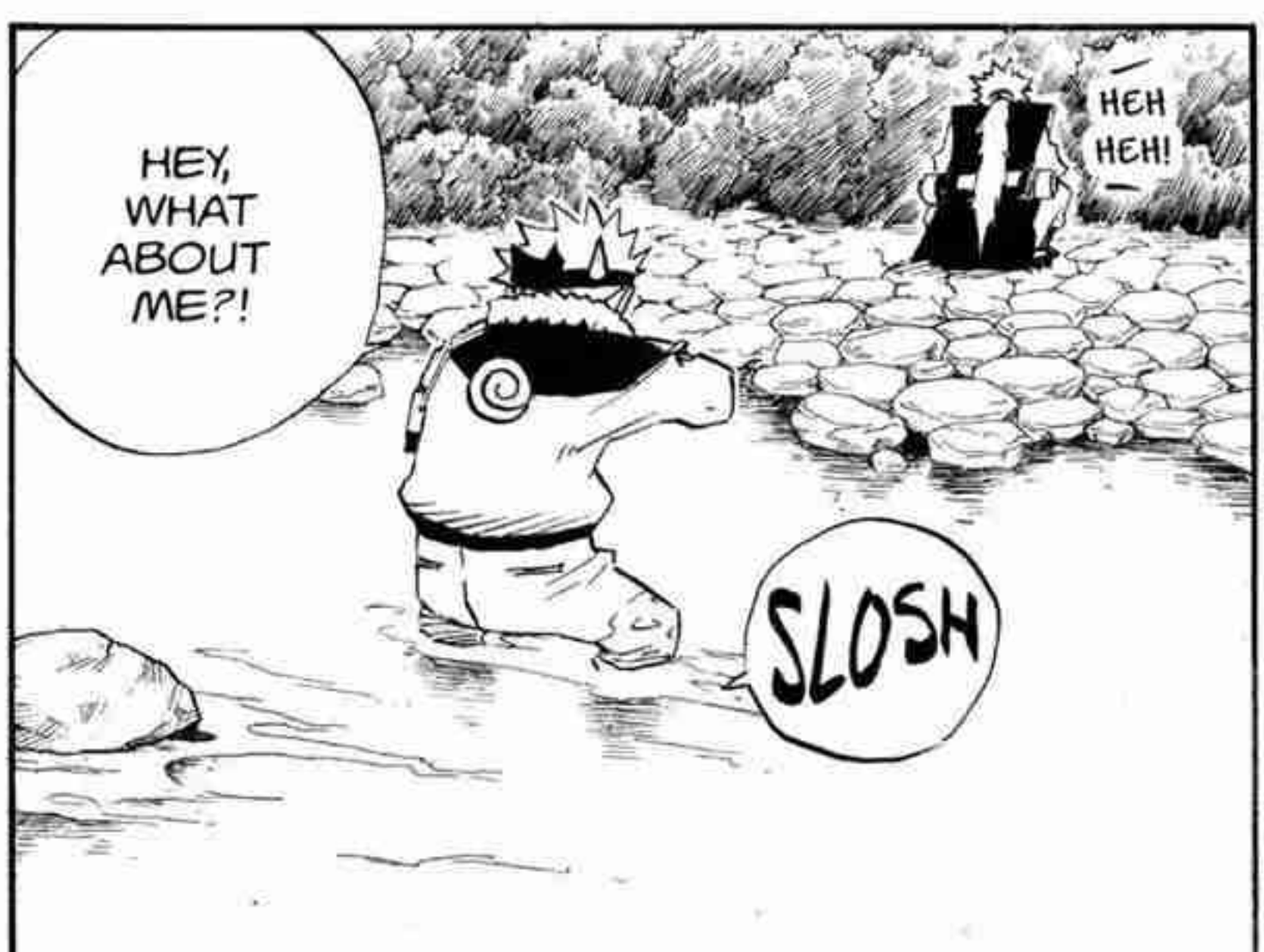
SUMMONING?

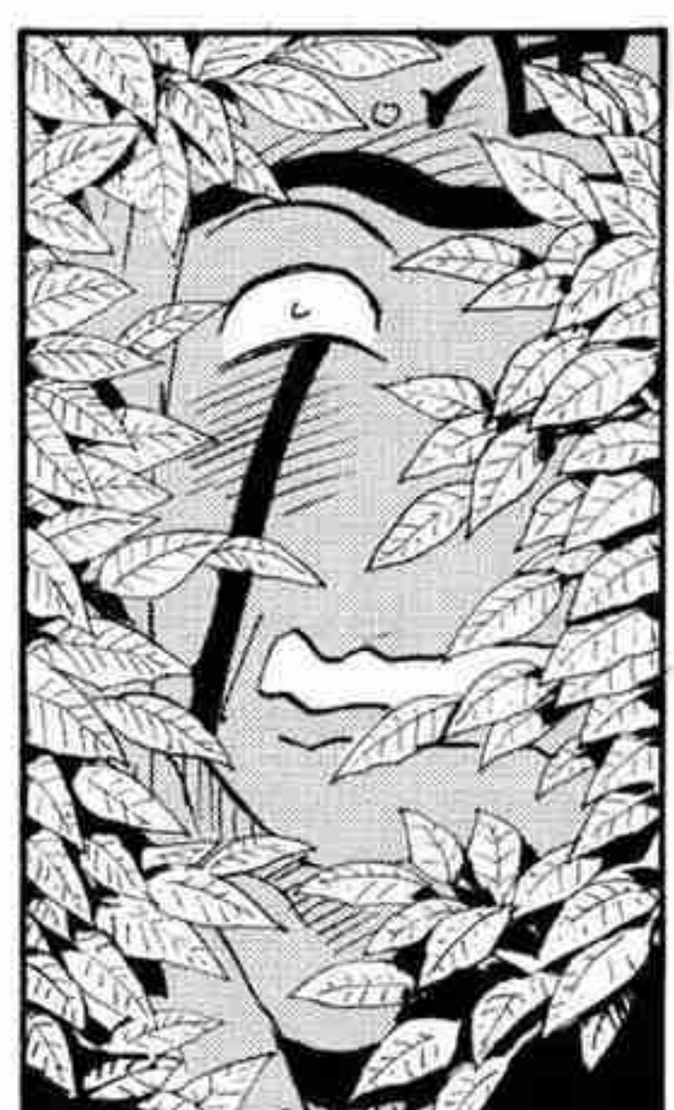
IF IT GOES WRONG, I COULD DIE!
WHAT D'YA MEAN?!

BUT FIRST, BEFORE WE START...
...YOU NEED TO COMPLETELY EXHAUST YOUR REGULAR CHAKRA VIA THE WATER-WALKING EXERCISE.

I'LL BE WATCHING, SO DON'T WORRY... NOW GET TO IT!
IT'LL MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO INVOKE THE RED CHAKRA!
WAAH!

SPLASH


HEY, WHAT ABOUT ME?!
HEH HEH!
SLOSH



WOBBLE
HUH...?
WOBBLE
CAN'T... MOVE...
SHLUPP

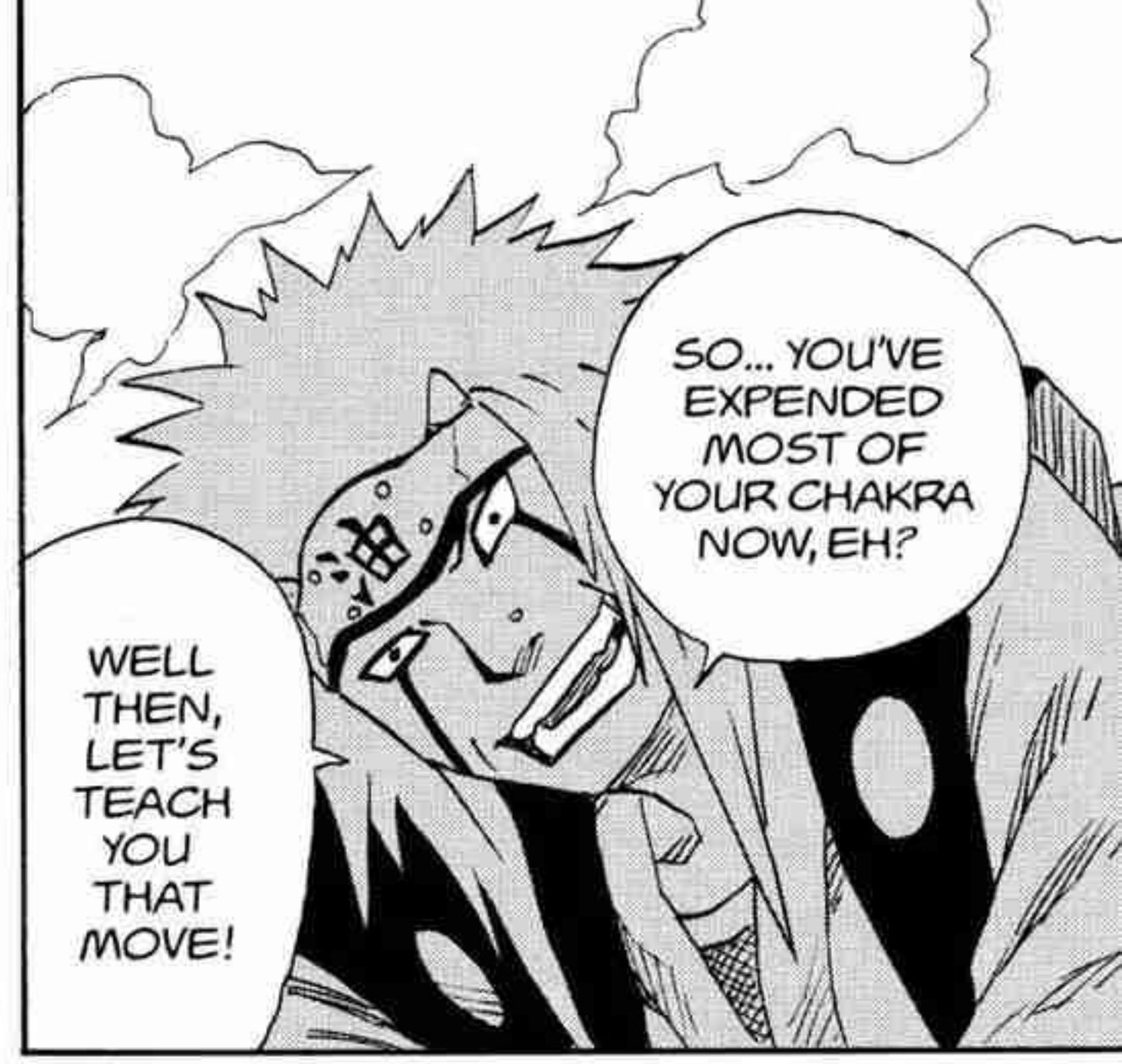
WOBBLE
THIS IS NOT GOOD...
SHOOT...
SLOSH

SPLASH
BLUP BLUP BLUP

BLINK

DOING THAT EXERCISE FOR ANY AMOUNT OF TIME CAUSES HIM TO FALL APART PRETTY QUICKLY.
AS I SUSPECTED, FINE CONTROL IS NOT HIS FORTE...

YES, SIR! FINALLY!
HOP


SO... YOU'VE EXPENDED MOST OF YOUR CHAKRA NOW, EH?
WELL THEN, LET'S TEACH YOU THAT MOVE!

SPLUT

FIRST, I'LL DEMONSTRATE ...
CRUNCH
...SO WATCH CLOSELY!

CROUCH
FWUP
FWUP

FWSH

KUCHI-YOSE NO JUTSU! THE ART OF SUMMON-ING!!!

...PREPARE YOUR CHAKRA, PLACE THE HAND WITH WHICH YOU SIGNED THE CONTRACT PALM-DOWN ON THE GROUND...
AFTER THAT'S DONE, WHEN YOU'RE IN A PLACE WHERE YOU WANT TO CALL THE TOADS...
...AND MAKE THE FOLLOWING SIGNS... BOAR, DOG, ROOSTER, MONKEY, SHEEP.
CRUNCH

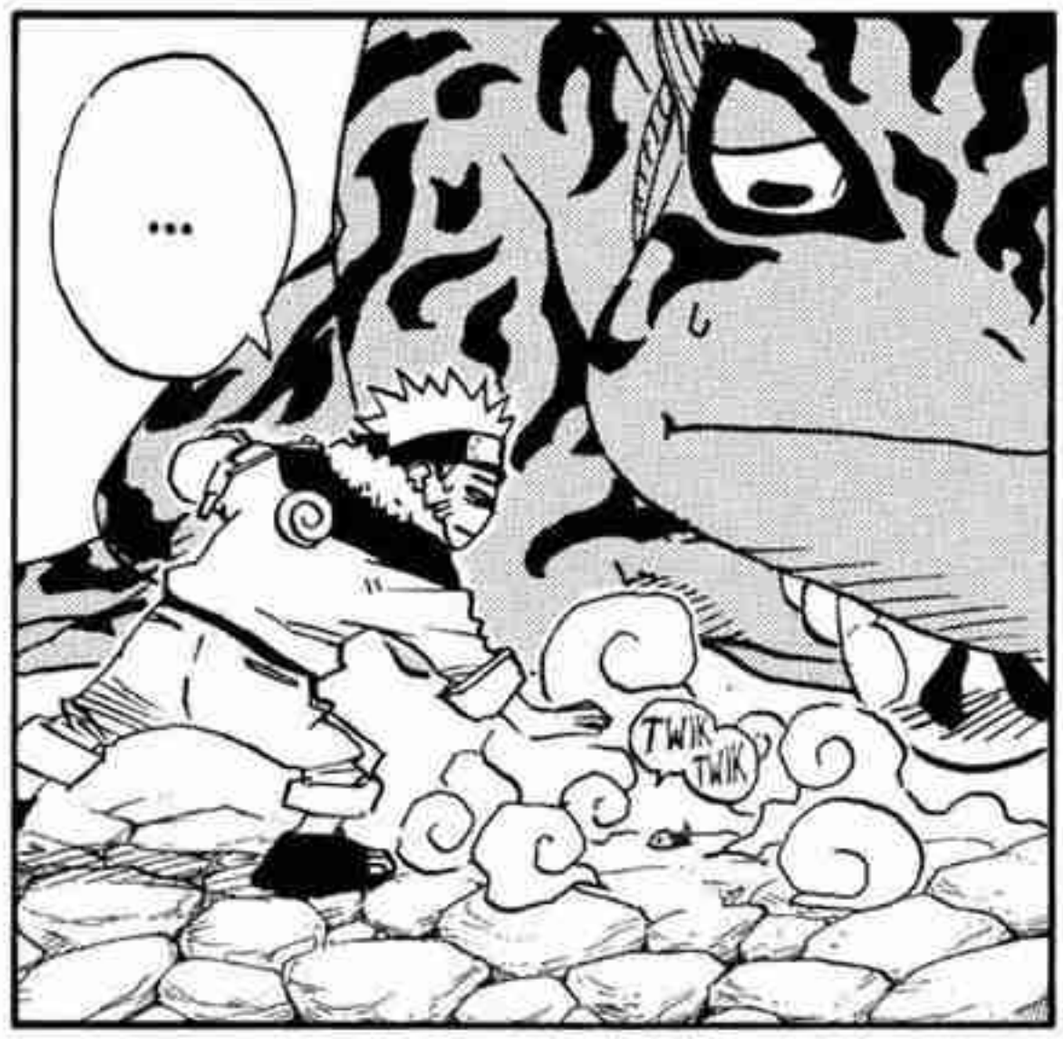
FIRST, YOU SIGN YOUR NAME WITH YOUR OWN BLOOD, AND THEN BELOW THAT...
THIS CONTRACT WITH THE SUMMONING TOADS HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS.
...YOU MAKE A FINGERPRINT IMPRESSION WITH ALL OF THE FINGERS OF ONE HAND!
FUUURL

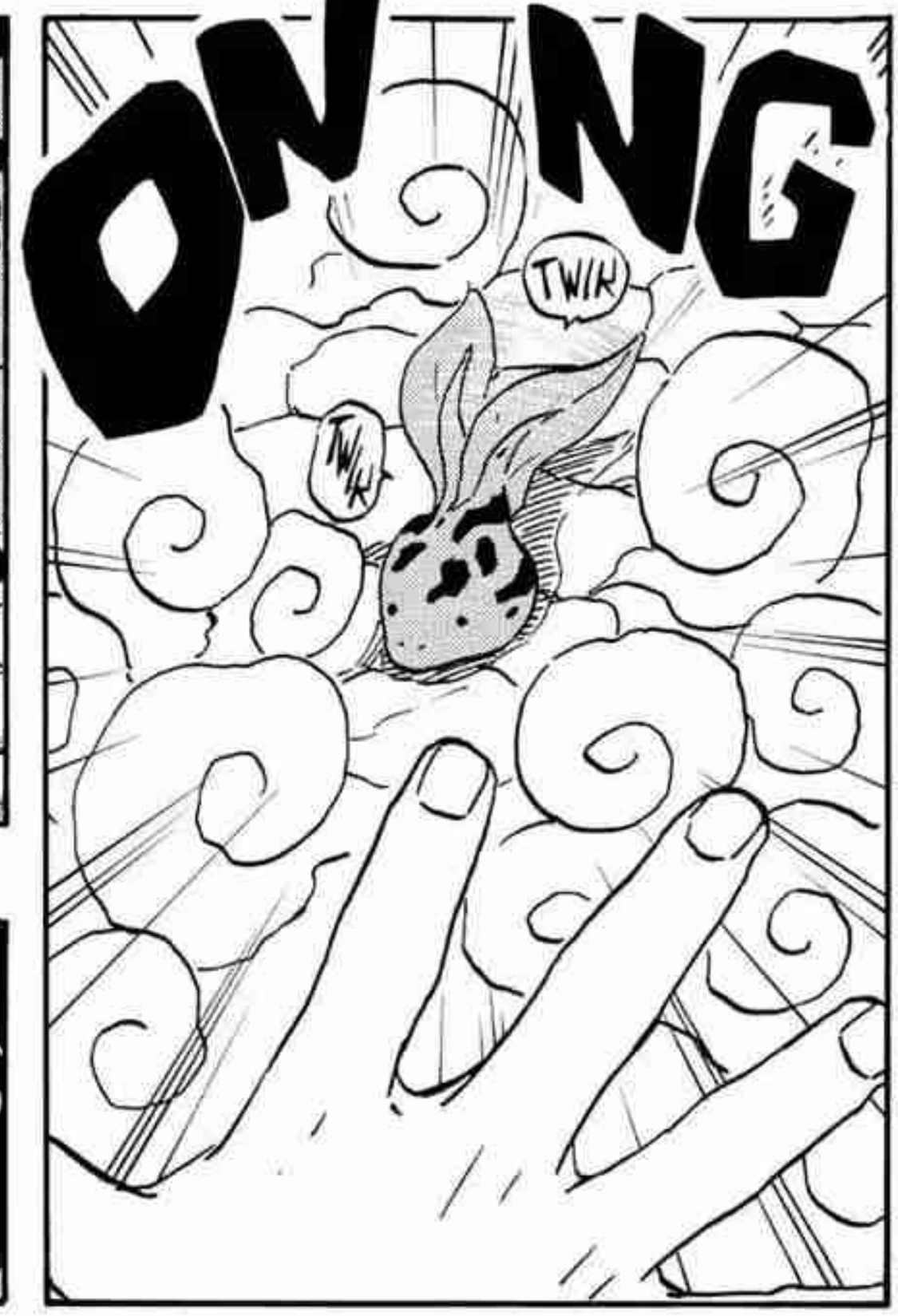
SMEAR
SCRIBBLE

SLAP
KUCHIYOSE NO JUTSU! THE ART OF SUMMONING!!
FWSH

SO HAVE A GO AT IT!
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO DRAW UPON THE RED CHAKRA PRETTY EASILY RIGHT NOW...
FWUP FWUP
I'M ON IT!

ALL RIGHT! THAT'S IT?!
SHF


...
TWIK TWIK


ON NG
TWIK
TWIK

HE REALLY DOESN'T HAVE ANY TALENT, DOES HE...
...A...A TADPOLE...?

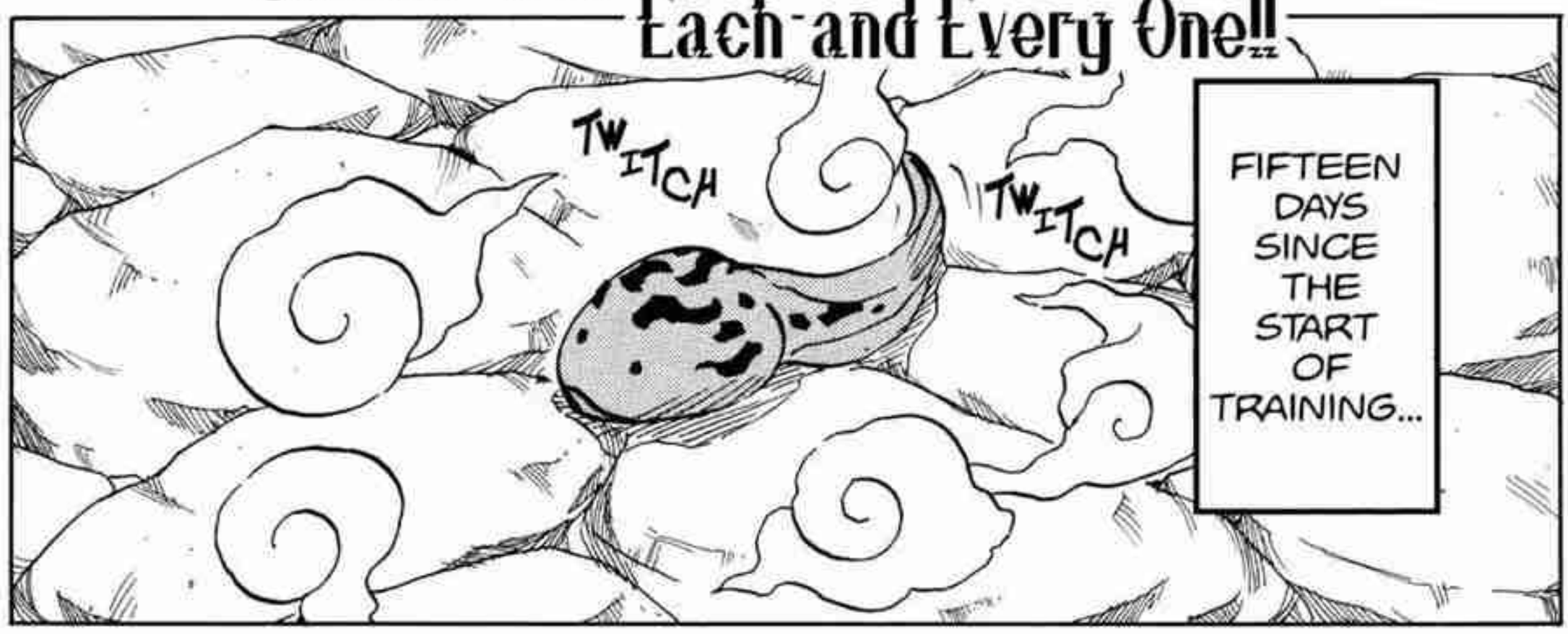
CAW
CAW
CAW

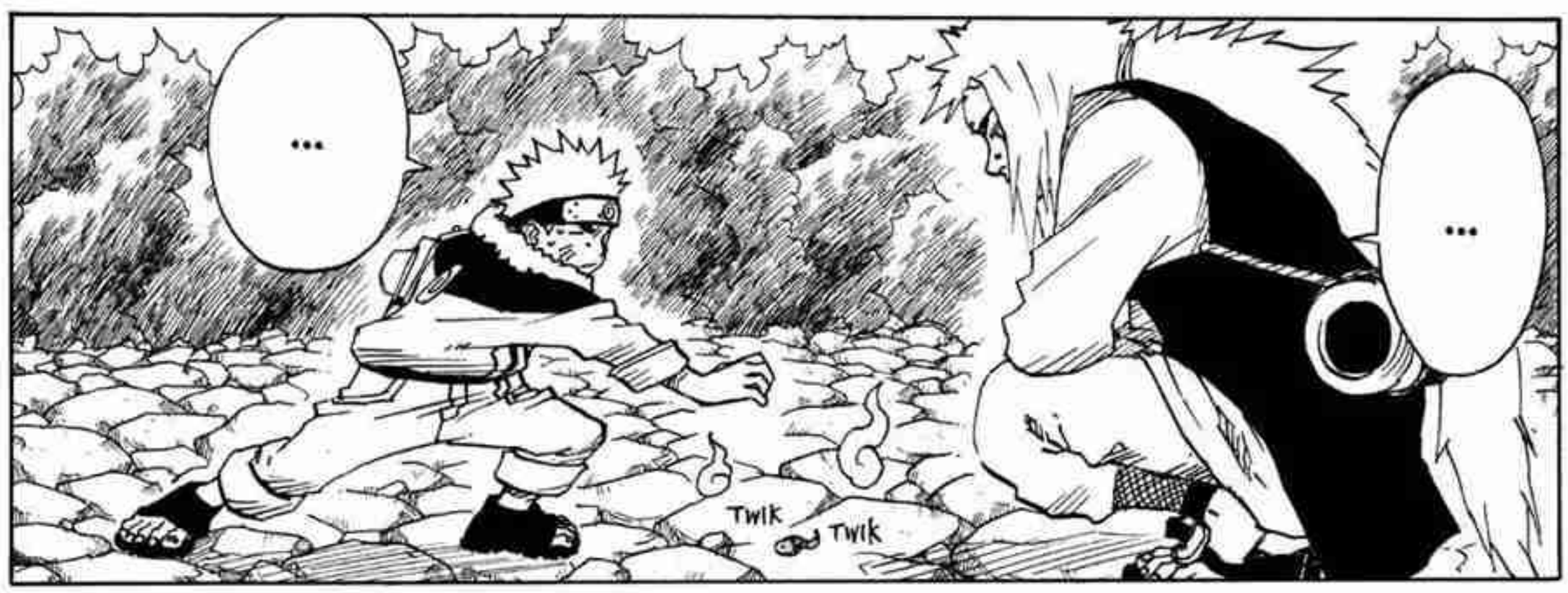
KISHIMOTO MASASHI'S MANGA REJECT SPECIAL NO. 4!

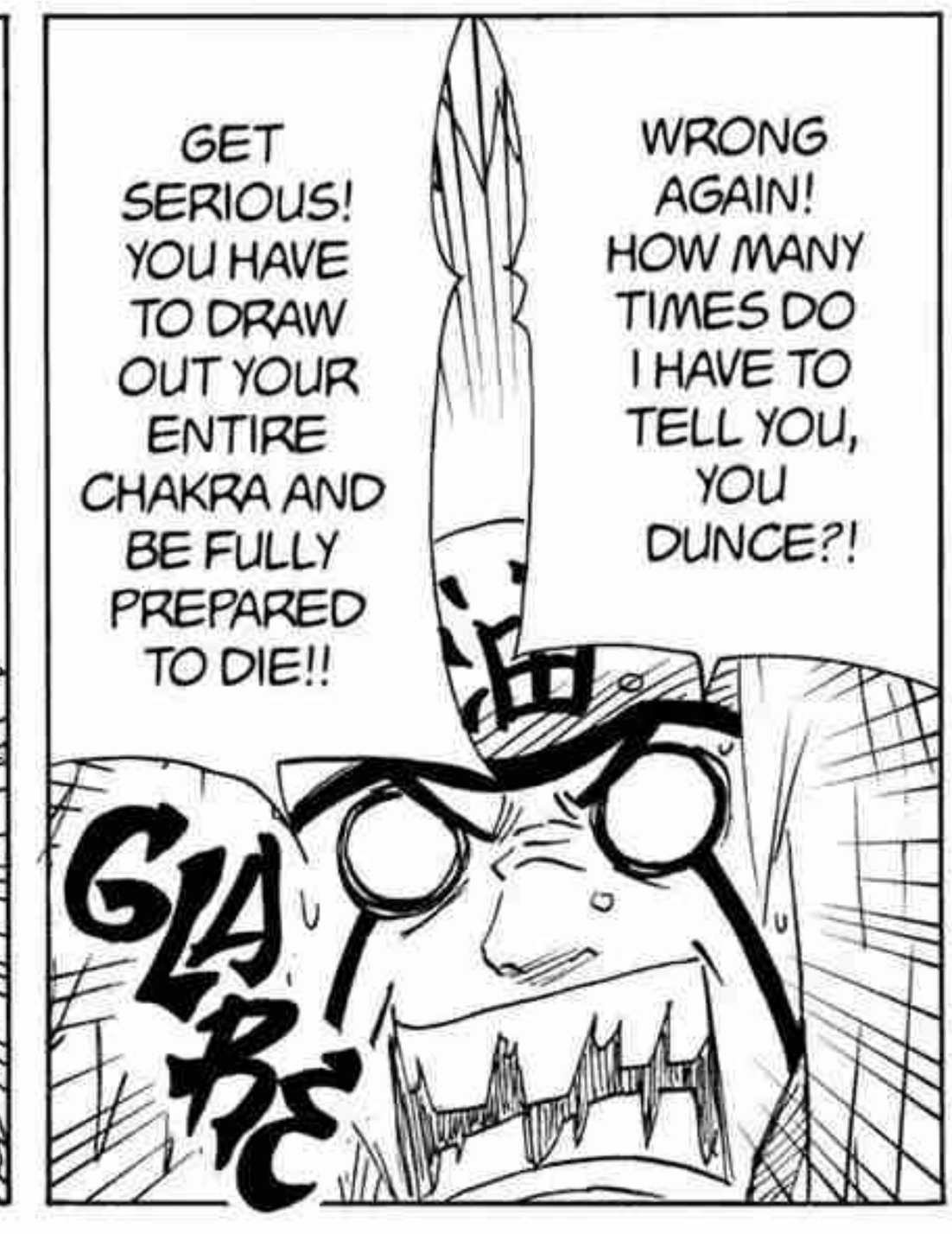
I'M GOING TO DO A MANGA REJECT SPECIAL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG WHILE!
THE TITLE OF THE REJECTED MANGA PANEL TO THE LEFT IS "MAGIC MUSHROOM," AND IT'S A FANTASY-ADVENTURE MANGA SET IN A MAGICAL WORLD (IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S AN OTAKU MANGA). I NAMED IT AFTER A BAND THAT A FRIEND OF MINE USED TO BE A MEMBER OF. THE PLOT REVOLVES AROUND A DELINQUENT BOY WHO ATTENDS A MAGIC SCHOOL IN THIS MAGICAL WORLD. THE BOY HAPPENS UPON A FORBIDDEN TOME WITHIN WHICH IS SEALED A DARK WIZARD WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY WREAKED GREAT EVIL. THE BOY GETS INTO ALL SORTS OF TROUBLE, AND ALONG THE WAY HE LEARNS TONS OF LESSONS AND BECOMES MORE MATURE... BUT THE IDEA FLOPPED BRILLIANTLY. IN GENERAL, MANGA LIKE THIS, WHICH CONTAIN CONCEPTS SUCH AS MAGICAL ABILITY AND ALTERNATE UNIVERSES THAT REQUIRE A LOT OF EXPLANATION FOR READERS, TAKE UP AN INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF PAGES BECAUSE OF ALL THE EXPOSITION. SO I KNEW IT WASN'T IDEAL FOR A ONE-VOLUME MANGA, BUT I STILL TRIED TO SQUEEZE THE INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN CHARACTER, HIS ABILITIES, AND HIS UNIVERSE ALL INTO THE INITIAL "HOOK." I ALSO COMBINED THE SECOND HALF'S THEME AND PLOT INTRODUCTIONS AS WELL TO MINIMIZE THE PAGE COUNT, BUT IT SEEMS THAT SUCH MANGA JUST DON'T FARE VERY WELL... NEWCOMERS WHO DRAW THIS SORT OF MANGA APPARENTLY NEED TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY TALENTED IN ORDER TO PULL IT OFF SUCCESSFULLY. I ACTUALLY PERSISTED FOR QUITE A WHILE, REVISING AND RESUBMITTING IT NUMEROUS TIMES DESPITE CONTINUOUS REJECTION FROM MY EDITOR. BUT THEN ONE DAY HE SAID, "THIS WORLD ALREADY HAS *BASTARD* AND *BERSERK*, YOU KNOW?!" "OH, ALL RIGHT! I GIVE UP!" I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, AND PROMPTLY STOPPED WORKING ON IT.

HOWEVER, WELL, I STILL RATHER LIKED THE IDEA OF THIS "MAGIC MUSHROOM," SO I ENTERTAINED THE THOUGHT OF DRAWING IT AGAIN SOME DAY, PERHAPS AFTER *NARUTO* ENDS, SO I WAS ORIGINALLY NOT PLANNING TO SUBMIT IT TO THE MANGA REJECT SPECIAL. BUT THEN WHY DID I BRING IT UP NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE VOLUME 4? BECAUSE I RECENTLY BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH THE NOVEL *HARRY POTTER*, AND SEEING HOW SIMILAR THE PREMISE AND STORY WERE TO IT, I'M LOATH TO BE CALLED A COPYCAT. SO I LOST INTEREST IN DRAWING IT, AND DECIDED TO SHOWCASE IT HERE.

Number 93: Impassioned Efforts... Each and Every One!!







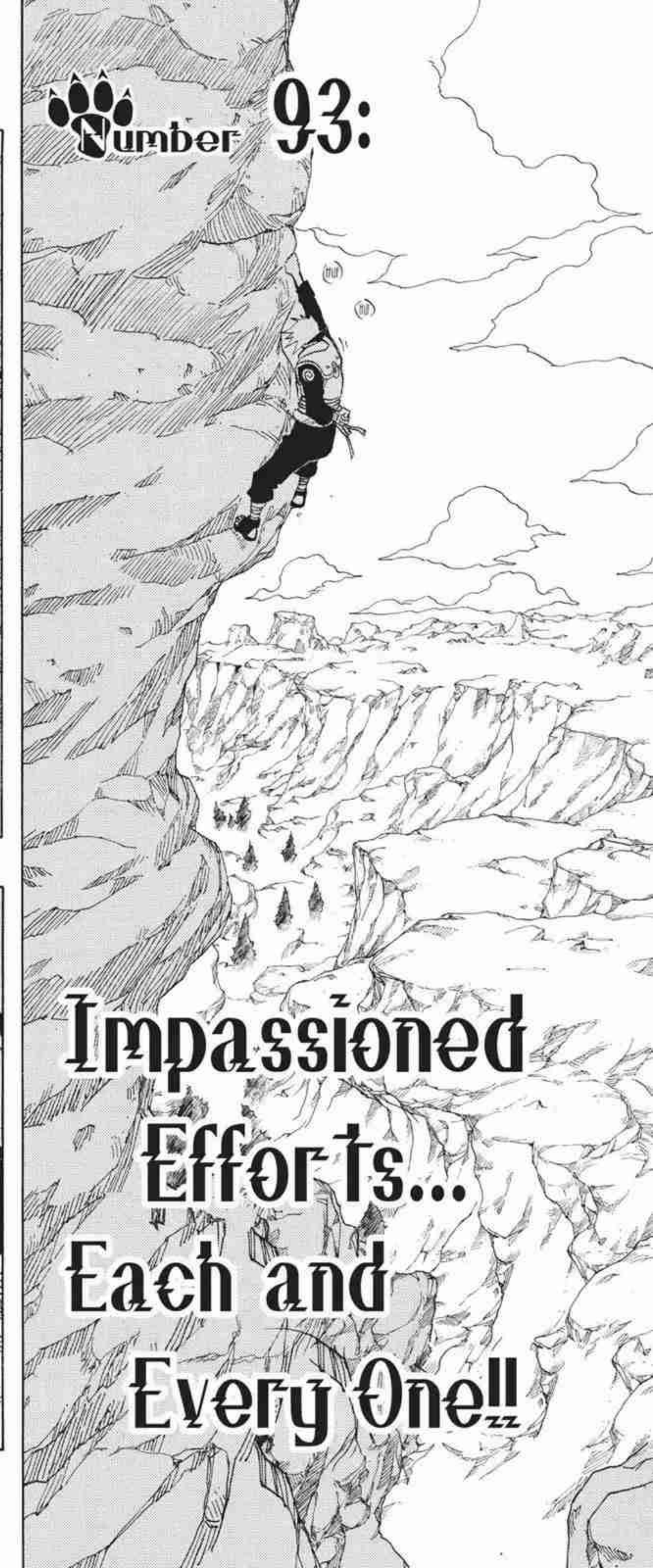
SNORT!
SNORT!

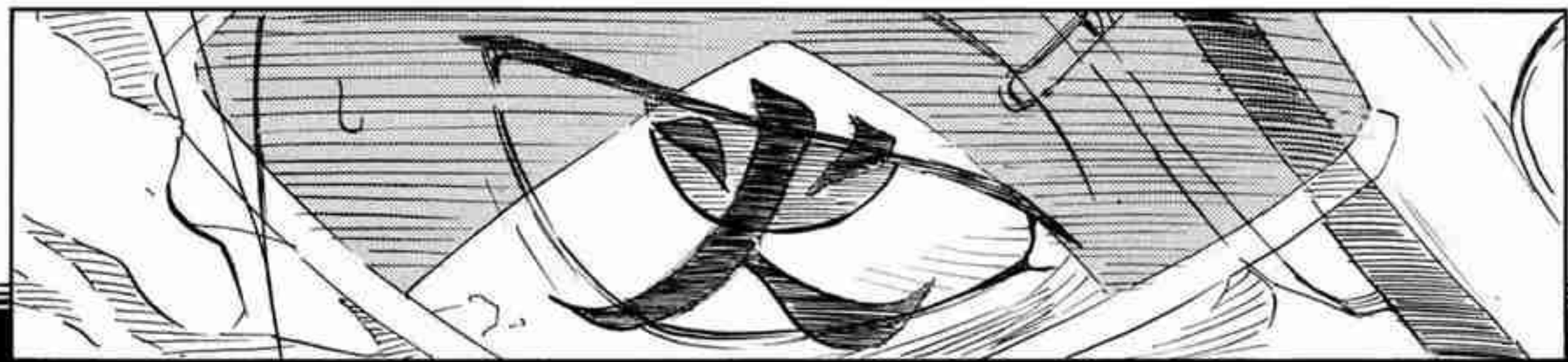
ALL RIGHT!!
TRY IT AGAIN!!
...NARUTO'S LESSONS WERE STILL NOT GOING WELL.
TWIK TWIK
...

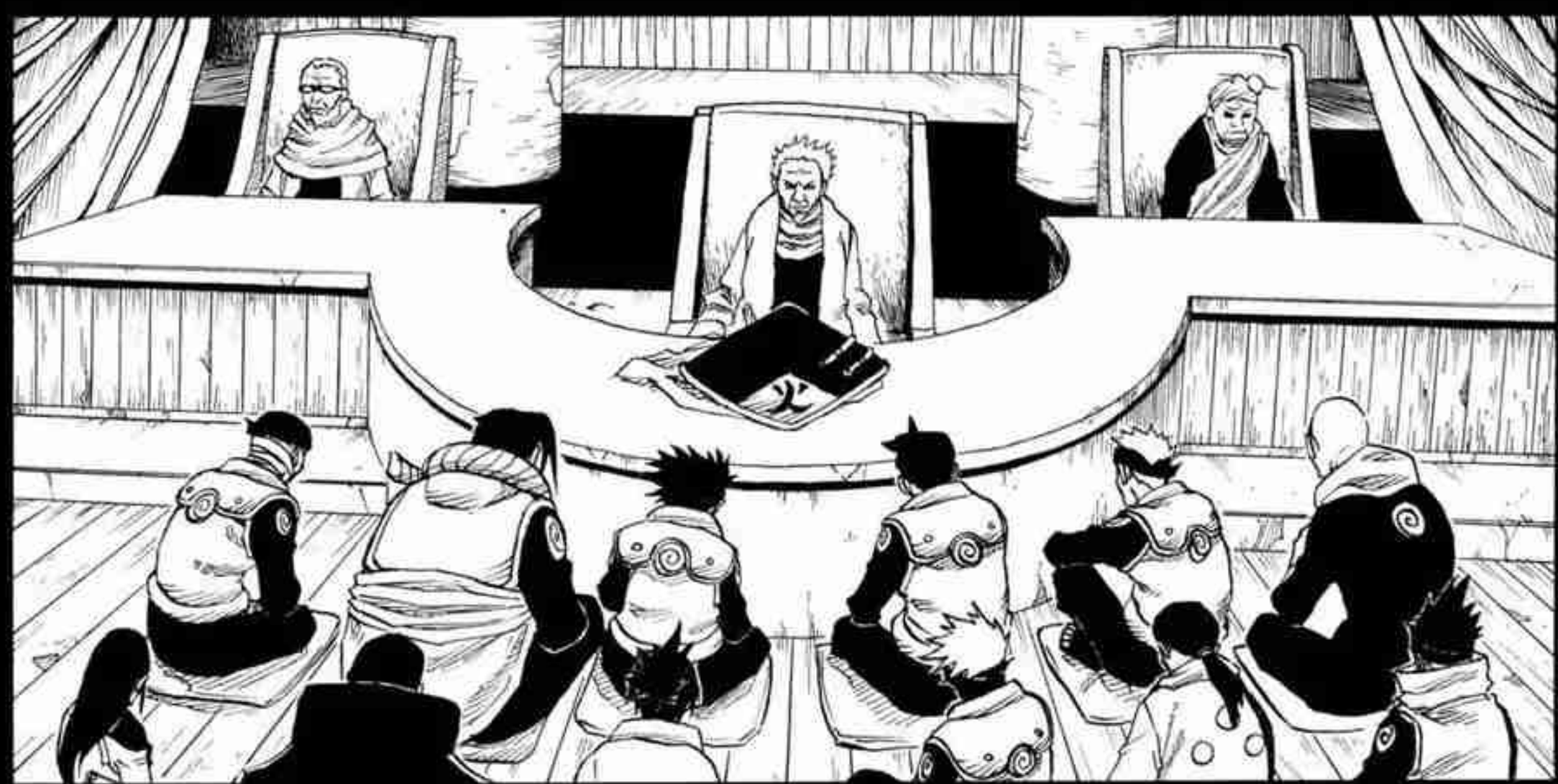
GRAB

Number 93:

Impassioned Efforts... Each and Every One!!



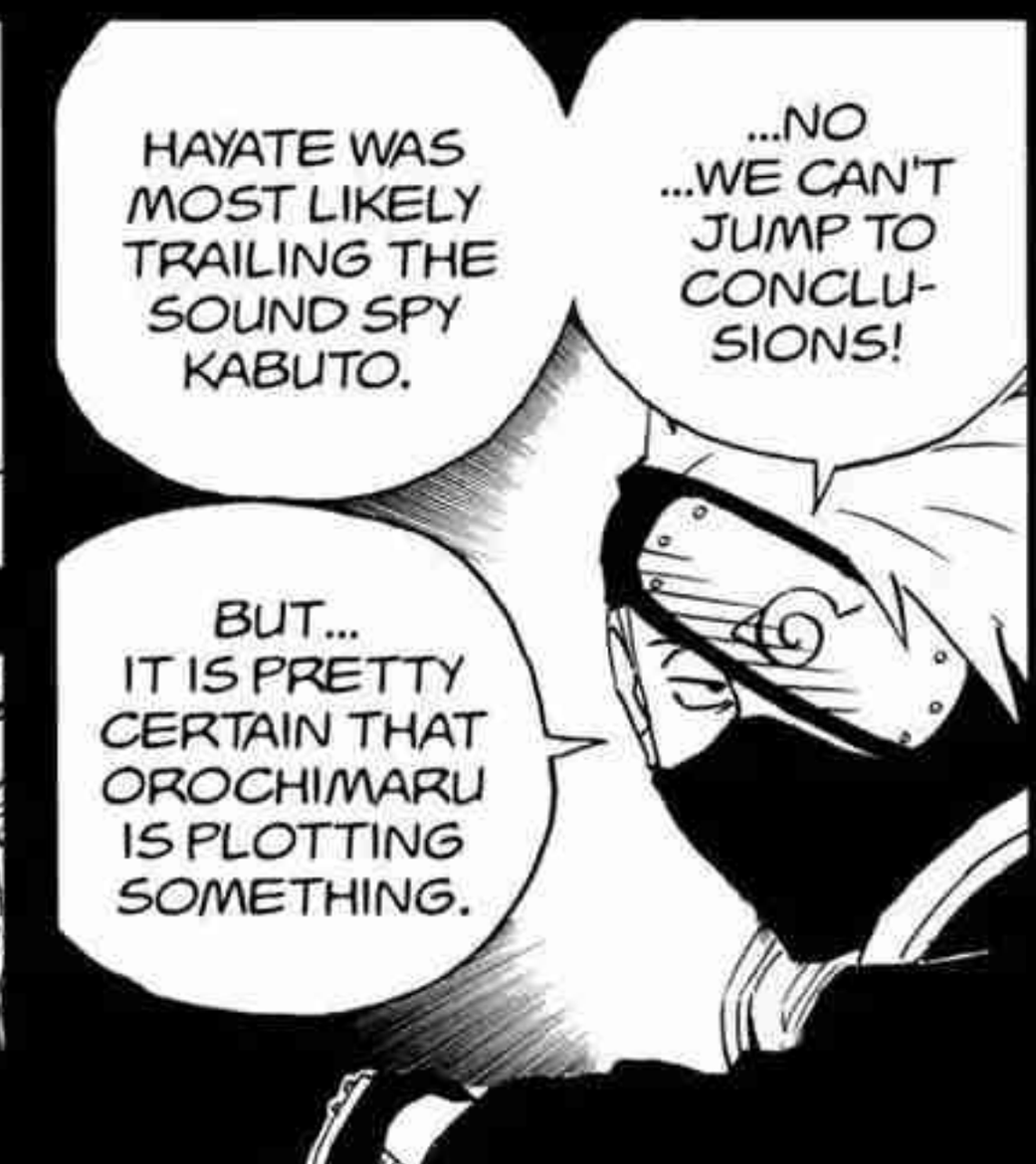




...HIS BODY WAS DISCOVERED THIS MORNING NEAR KIKYO CASTLE.
SADLY...

WHAT...? HAYATE...?
!

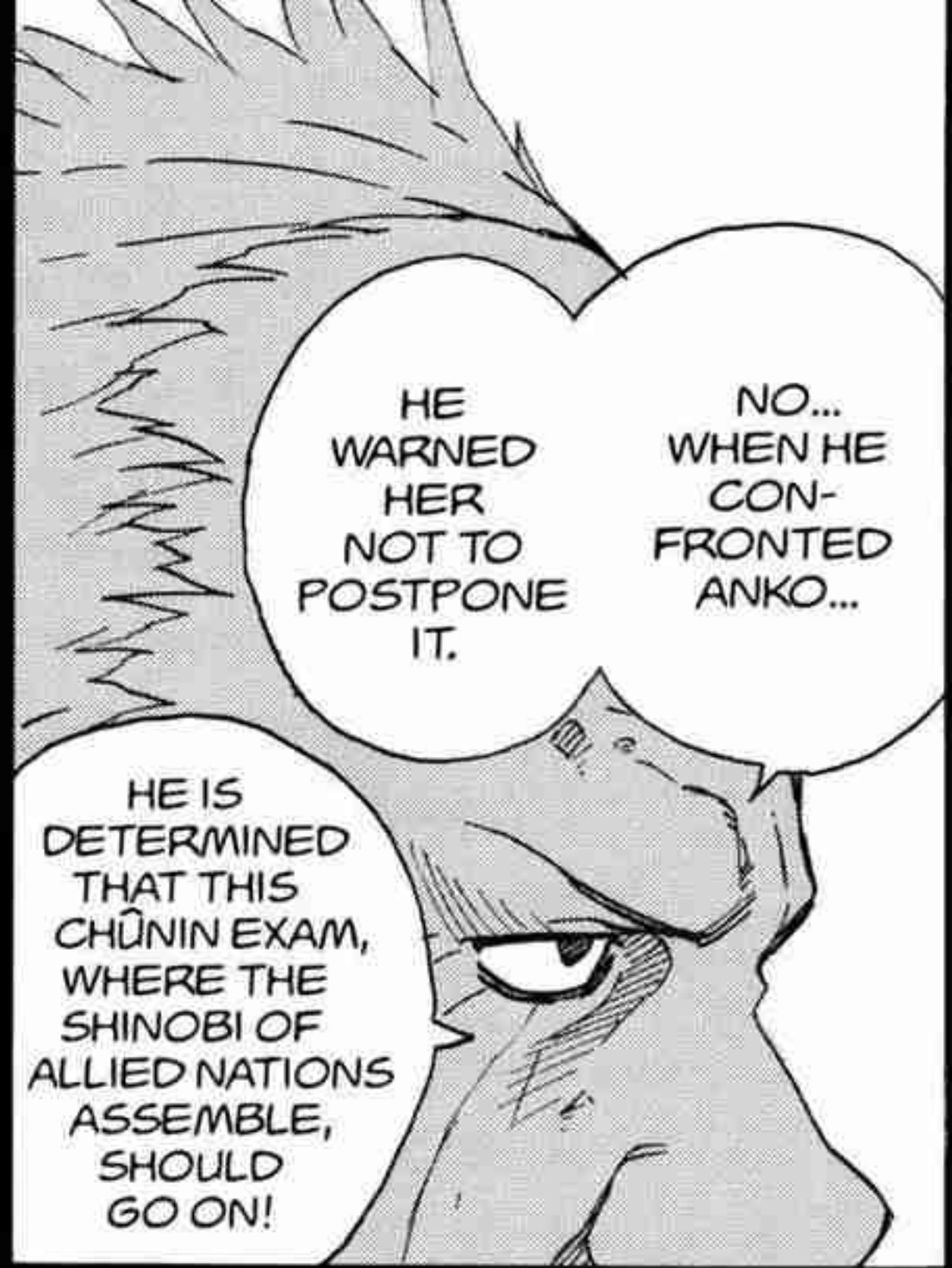
AND GO AFTER OROCHI-MARU...
THEN WE SHOULD POSTPONE THE CHÛNIN EXAM...


HAYATE WAS MOST LIKELY TRAILING THE SOUND SPY KABUTO.
...NO ...WE CAN'T JUMP TO CONCLU-SIONS!
BUT... IT IS PRETTY CERTAIN THAT OROCHIMARU IS PLOTTING SOMETHING.

WAS IT OROCHIMARU?

BUT... WHY?

OROCHIMARU IS STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE DOWN A SMALL NATION ALL BY HIMSELF.
AFTER HE DESERTED THIS VILLAGE, HE WAS PROBABLY COURTED BY MANY OTHER COUNTRIES.


HE WARNED HER NOT TO POSTPONE IT.
NO... WHEN HE CON-FRONTED ANKO...
HE IS DETERMINED THAT THIS CHÛNIN EXAM, WHERE THE SHINOBI OF ALLIED NATIONS ASSEMBLE, SHOULD GO ON!

THEN... YOU CAN'T MEAN...!
...IT WOULD MAKE ANY NATION DESIRE HIM.
FURTHER-MORE, HE CONVENIENTLY HARBORS DEEP GRUDGES AGAINST US HERE IN KONOHA...

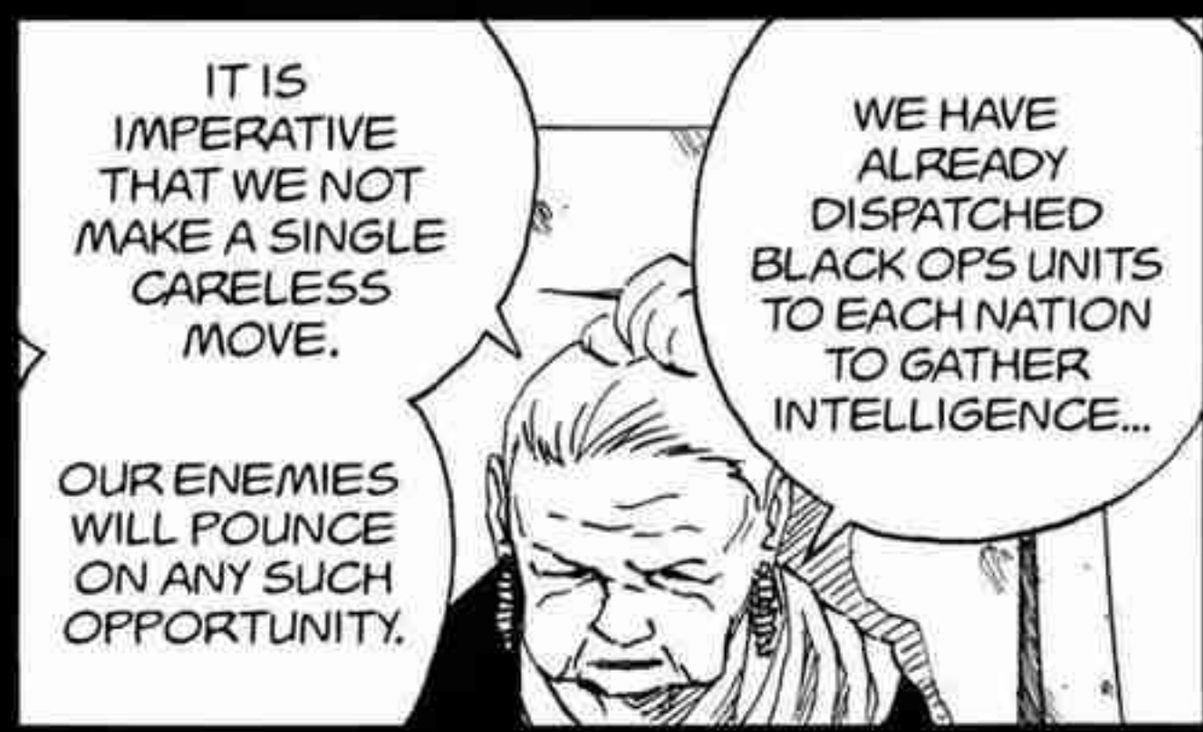
...

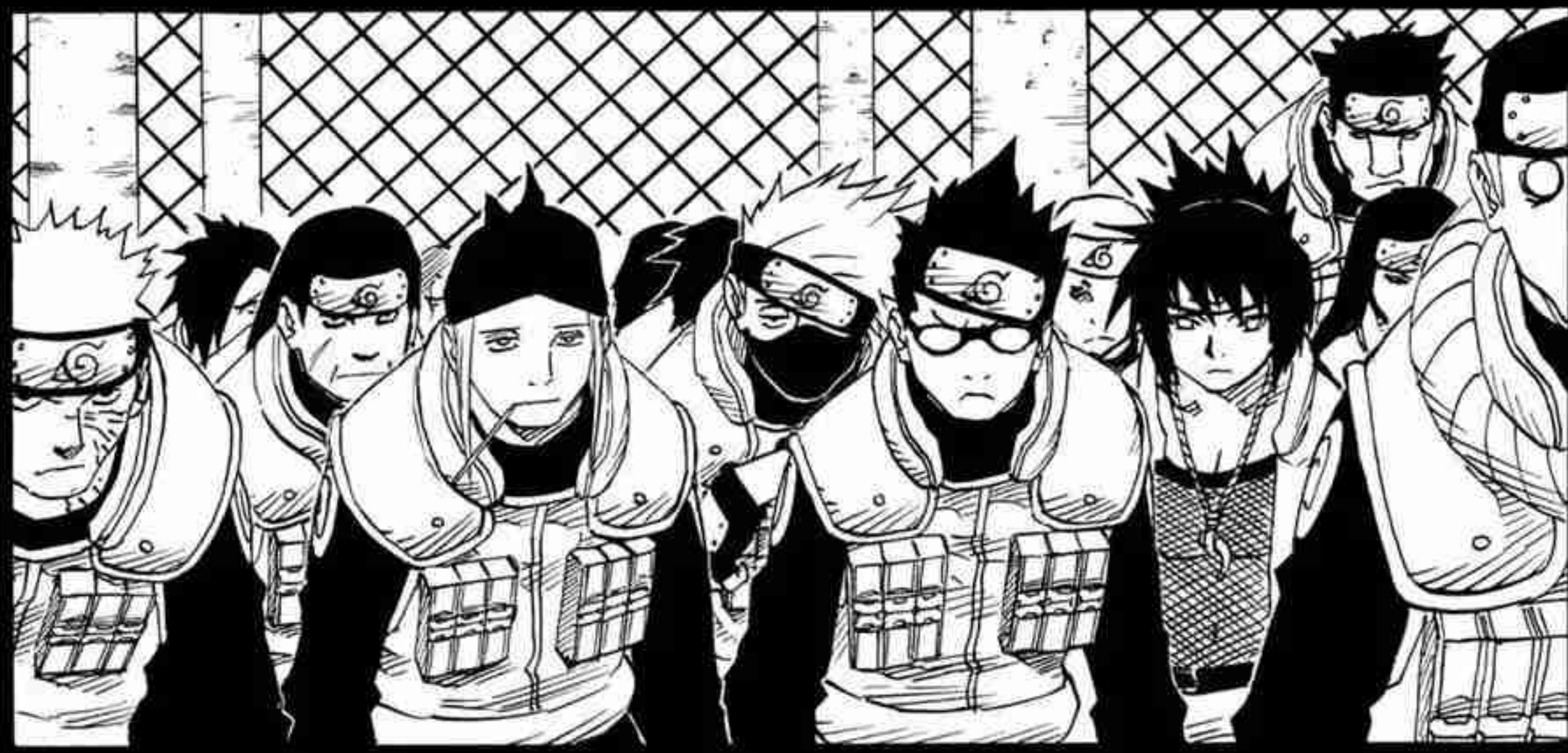
...AND BETRAY KONOHA...?!
YOU THINK THAT OUR ALLIES MIGHT PARTNER WITH OROCHIMARU...

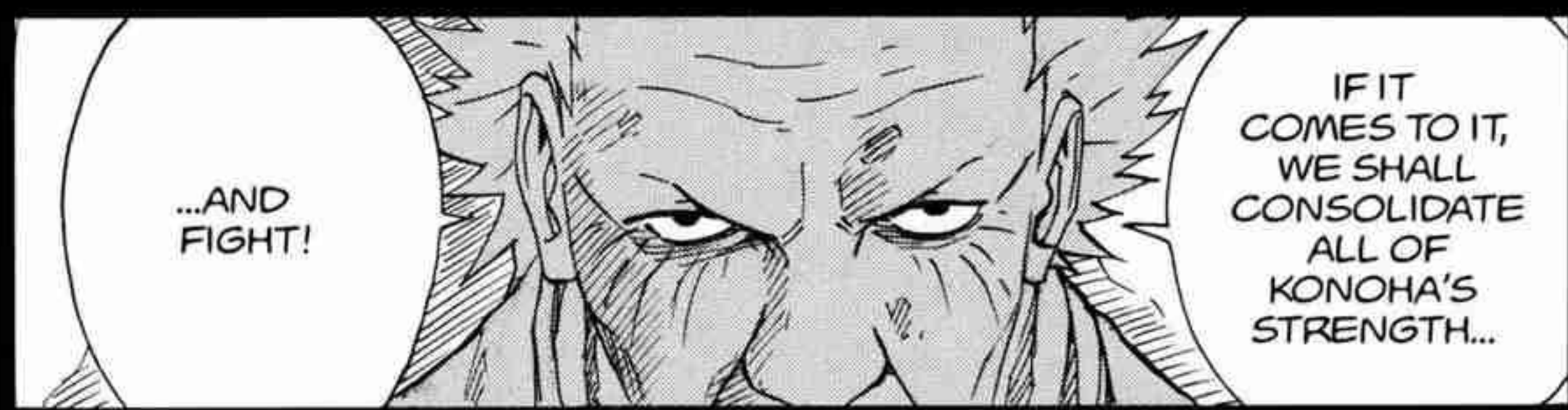
IT'S JUST LIKE THE NINJA WORLD WARS OF THE PAST...
WELL, THE TREATIES OF ALLIANCE ARE REALLY NO MORE THAN VERBAL AGREEMENTS...

WE MUST NOT MAKE TOO MANY ASSUMPTIONS...
IN ANY CASE... RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TOO LITTLE INFORMATION.

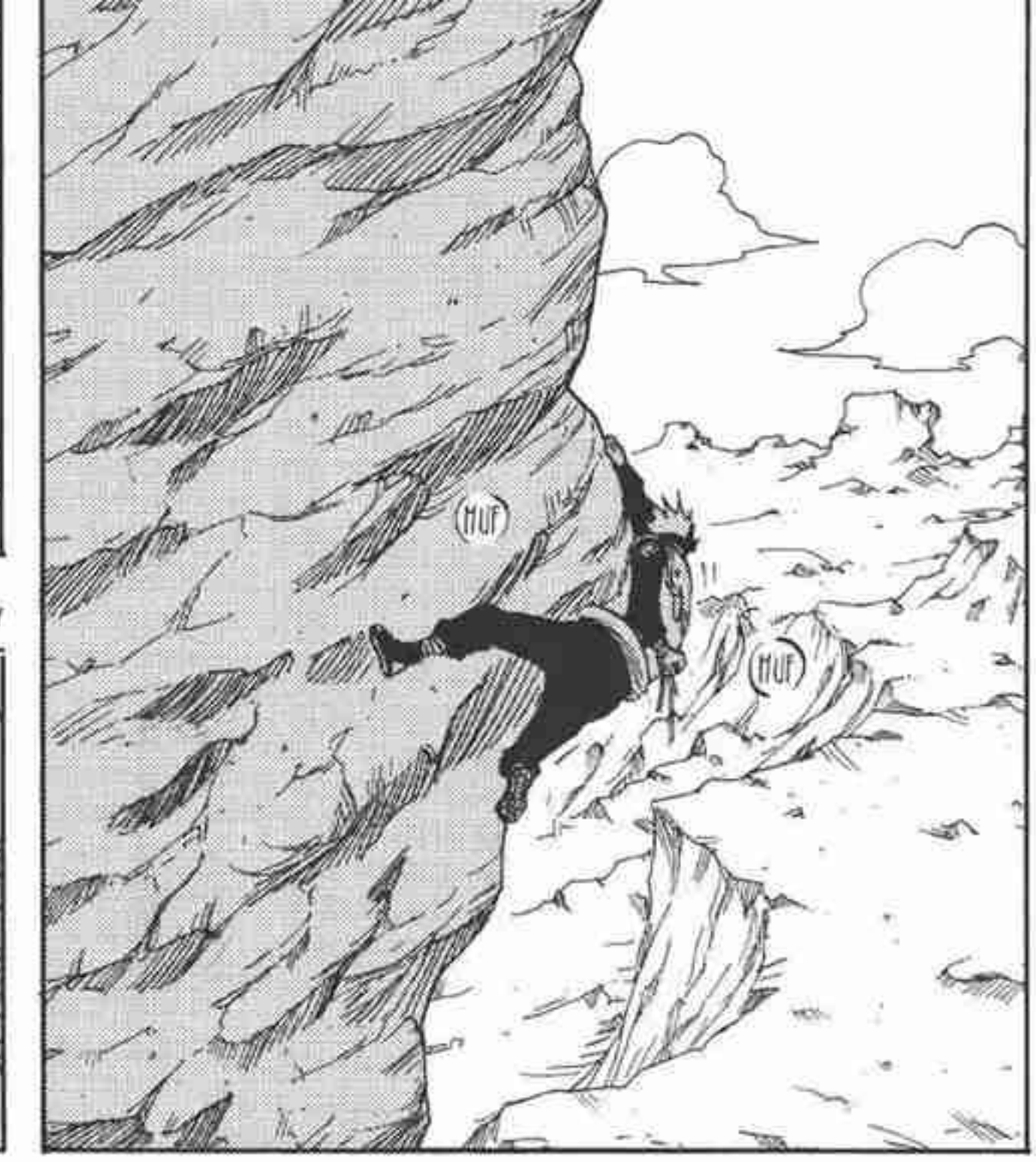
I HAVE THE UTMOST CONFIDENCE IN ALL OF YOU!

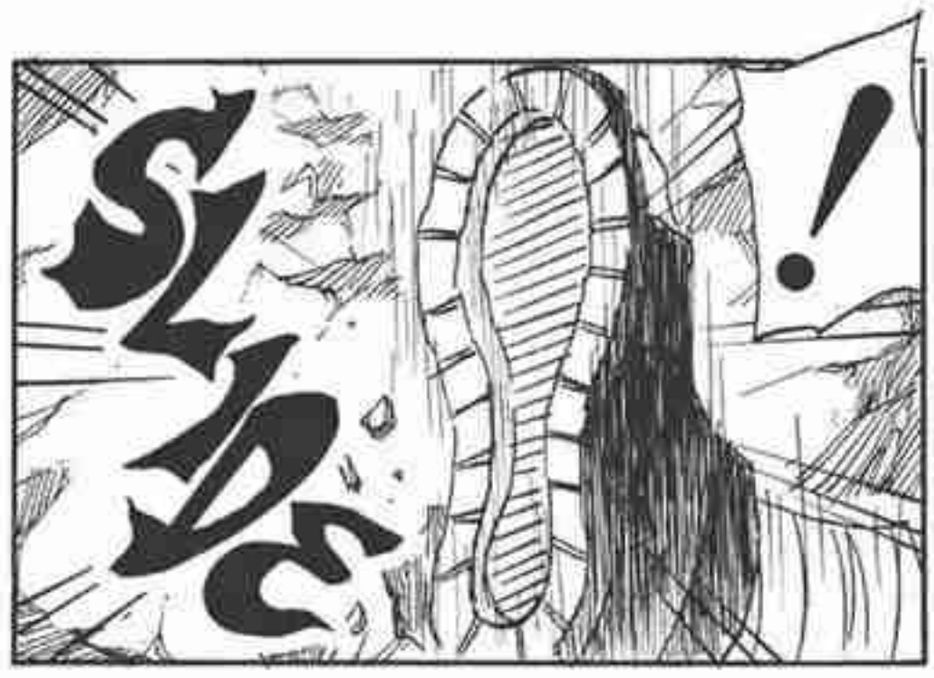

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE NOT MAKE A SINGLE CARELESS MOVE.
OUR ENEMIES WILL POUNCE ON ANY SUCH OPPORTUNITY.
WE HAVE ALREADY DISPATCHED BLACK OPS UNITS TO EACH NATION TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE...



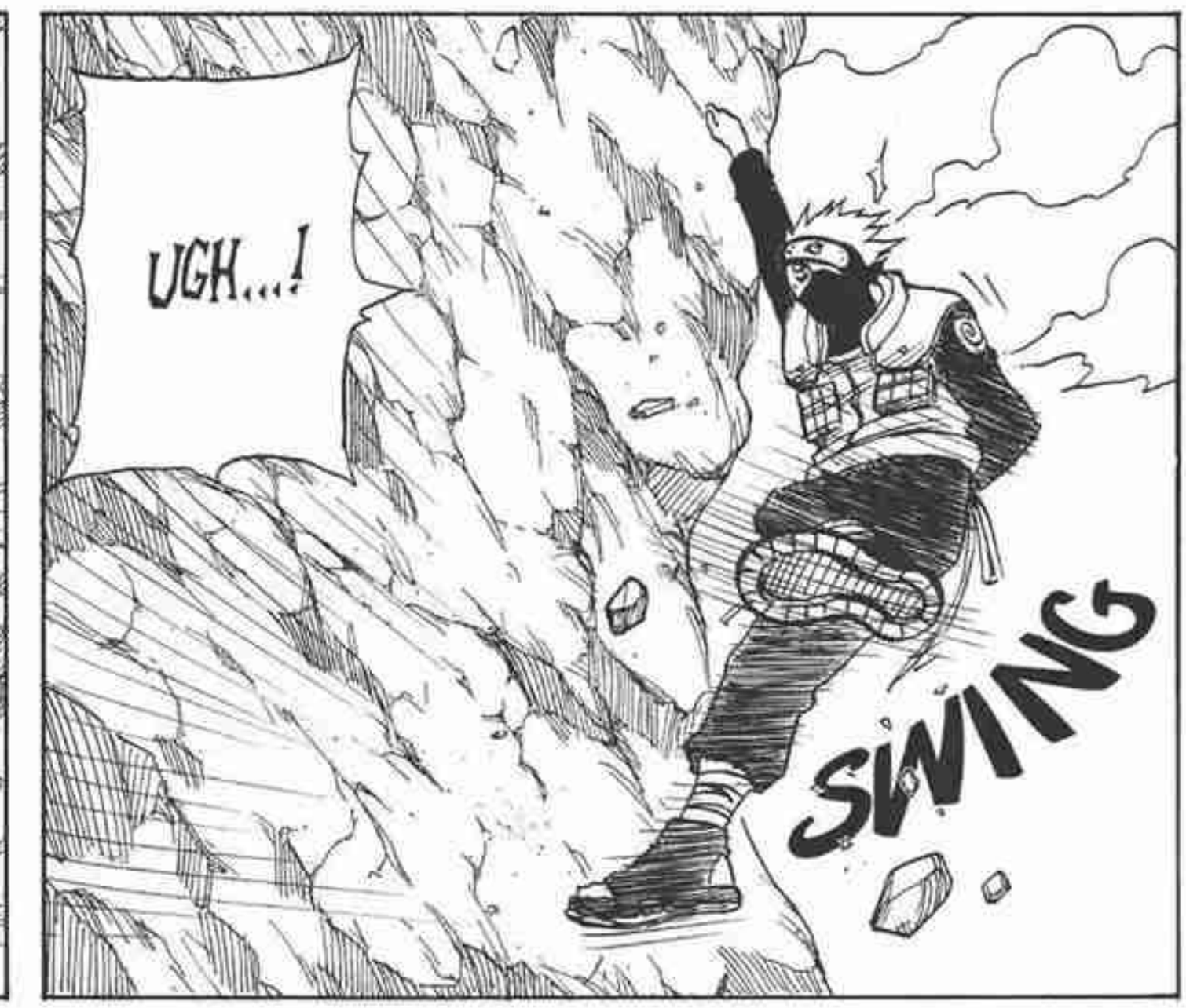

...AND FIGHT!
IF IT COMES TO IT, WE SHALL CONSOLIDATE ALL OF KONOHA'S STRENGTH...

GNCH


HUF
HUF

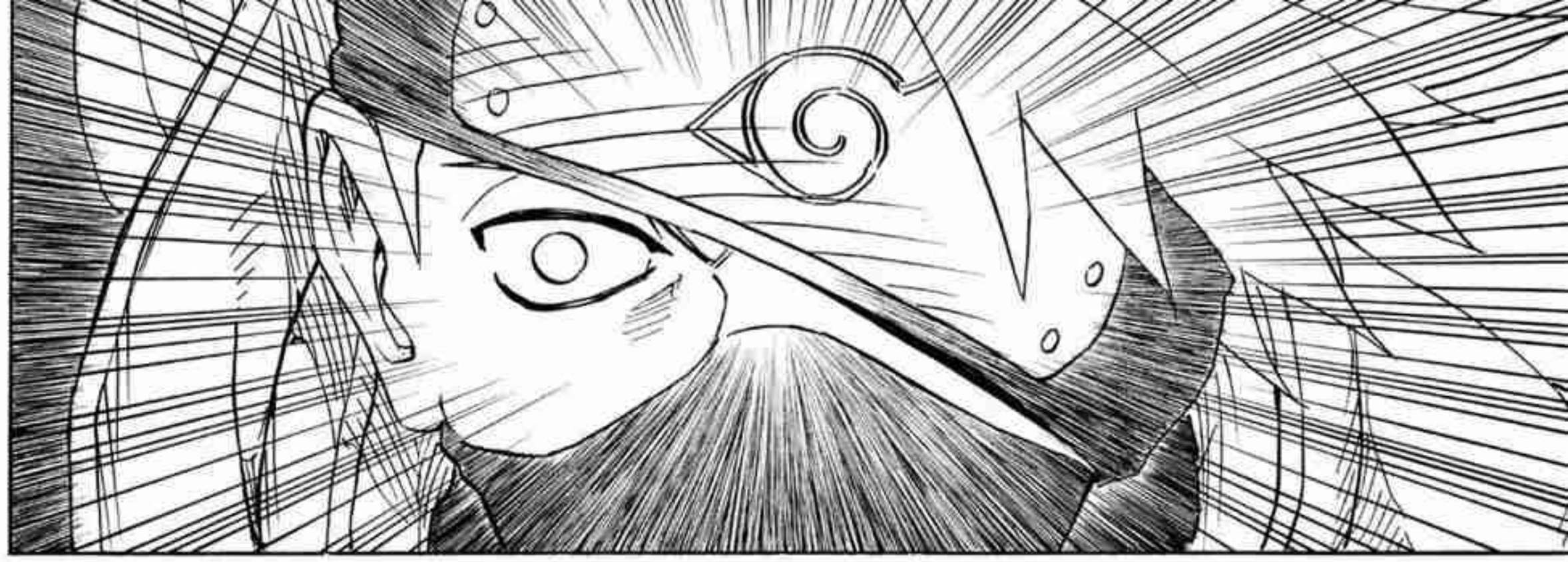

SLASH!

CLENCH


UGH...!
SWING

THROB

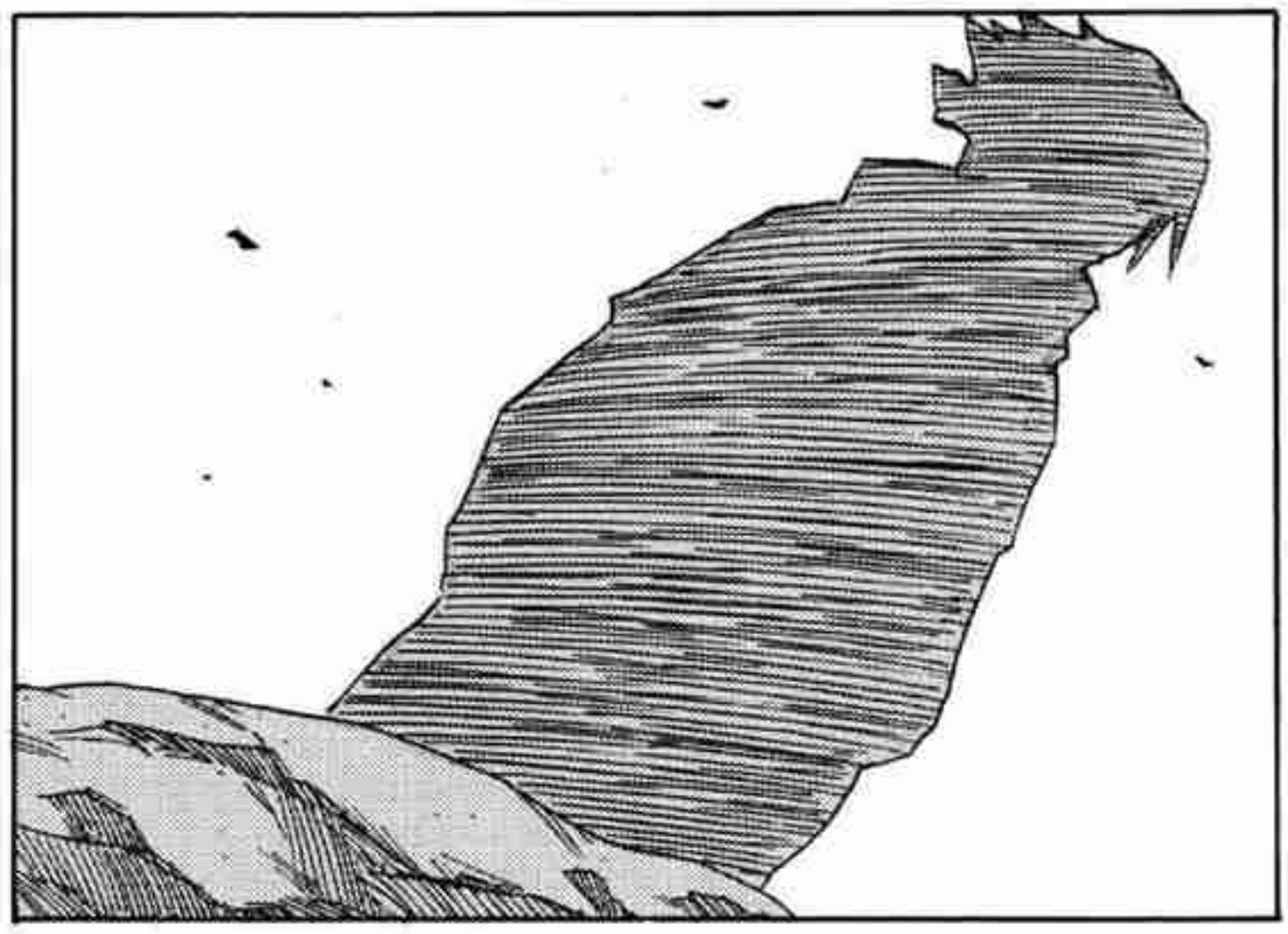
HUF
HUF

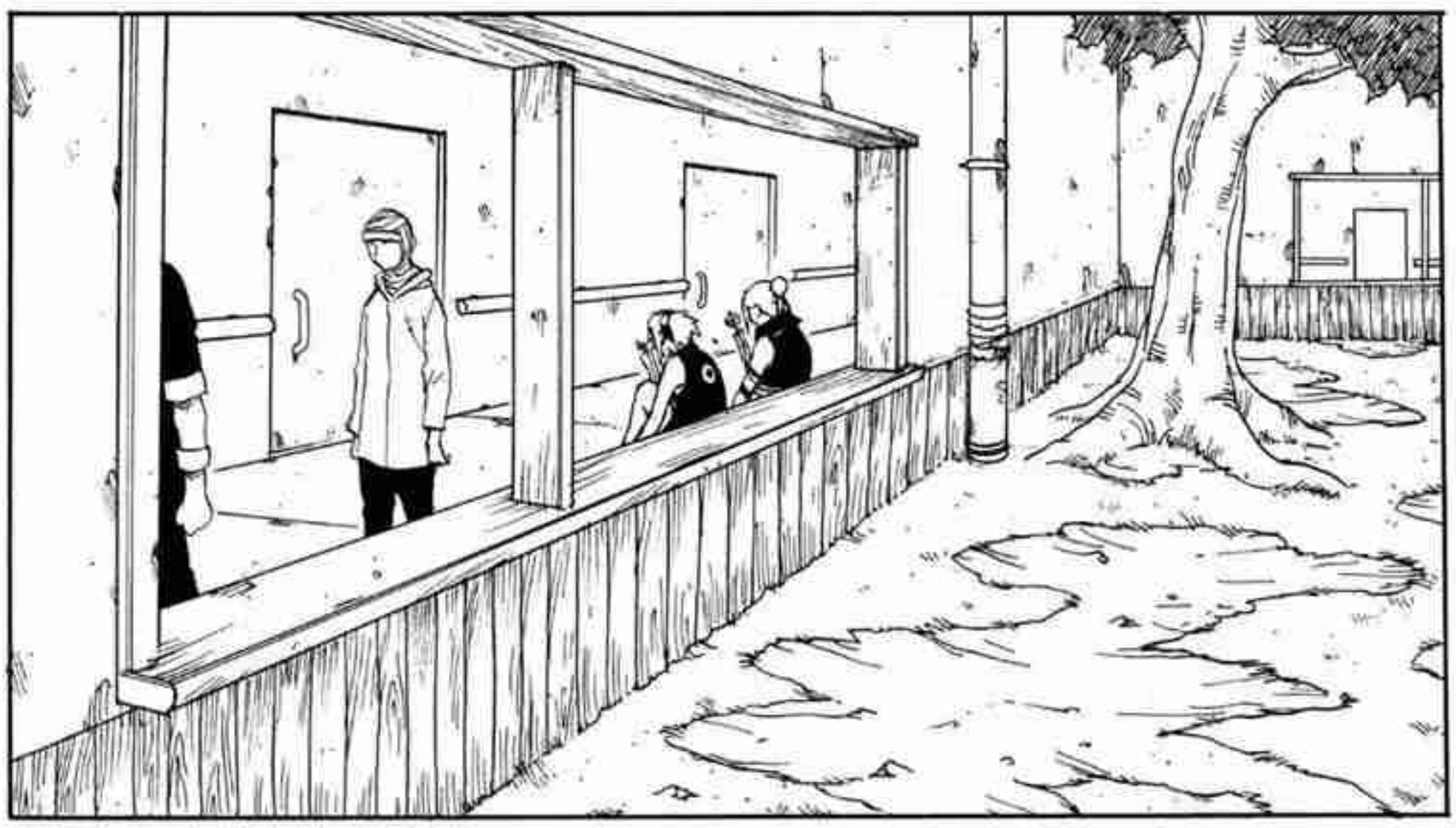


GRAB

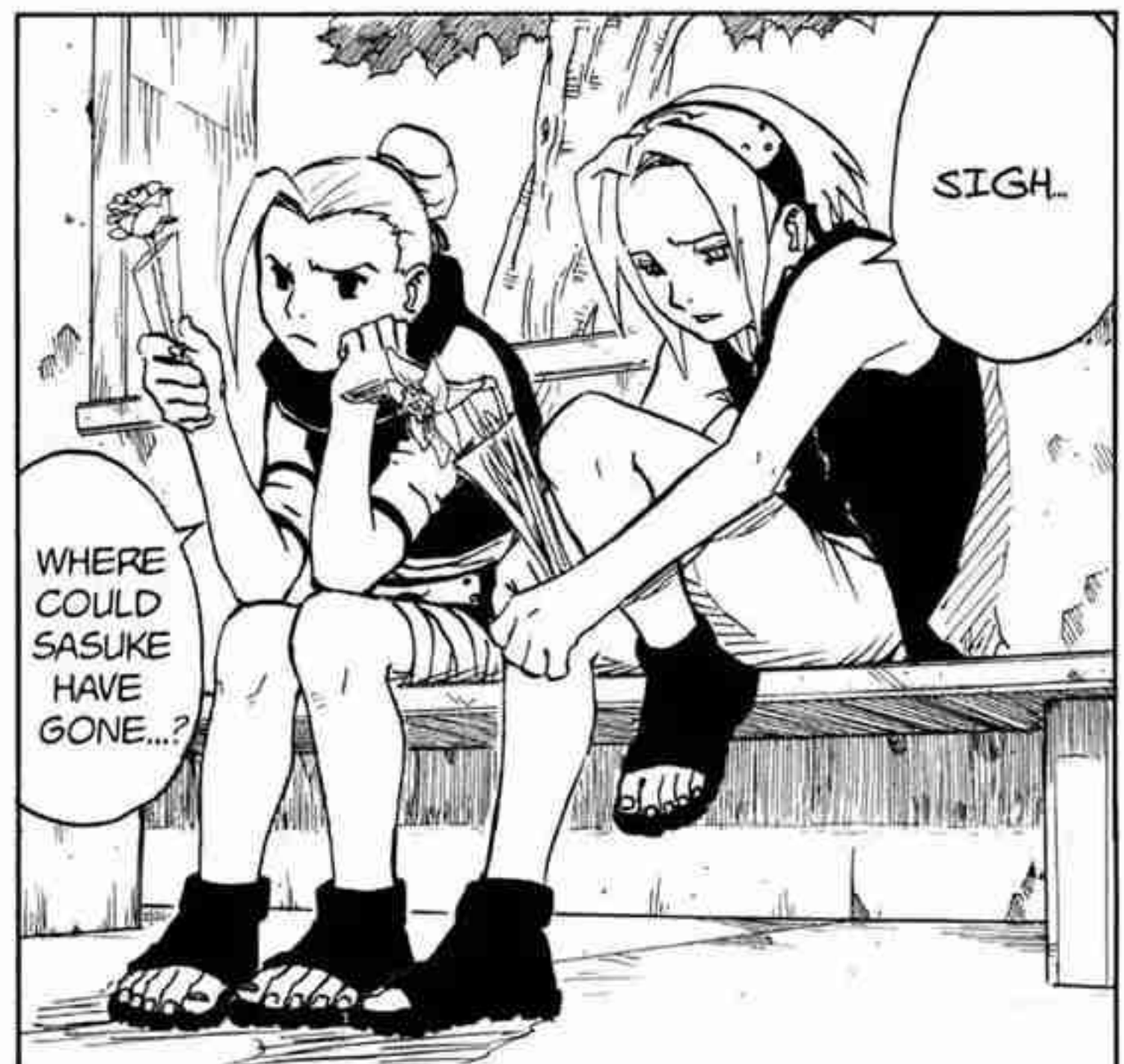
YO...

HEH...
YOU FINALLY SHOWED UP...





I WISH WE KNEW!


SIGH...
WHERE COULD SASUKE HAVE GONE...?

UCHIHA SASUKE HAS BEEN MISSING FROM HIS ROOM SINCE LAST NIGHT...

EVENTUALLY, SASUKE WILL BE FORCED TO SEEK ME OUT...

...

...EVEN THOUGH HE'S STILL SUPPOSED TO BE ON STRICT BED REST...

BLINK

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

STOP!

!

!

HUG

...SASUKE...

WHERE IN THE WORLD DID YOU GO...?

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

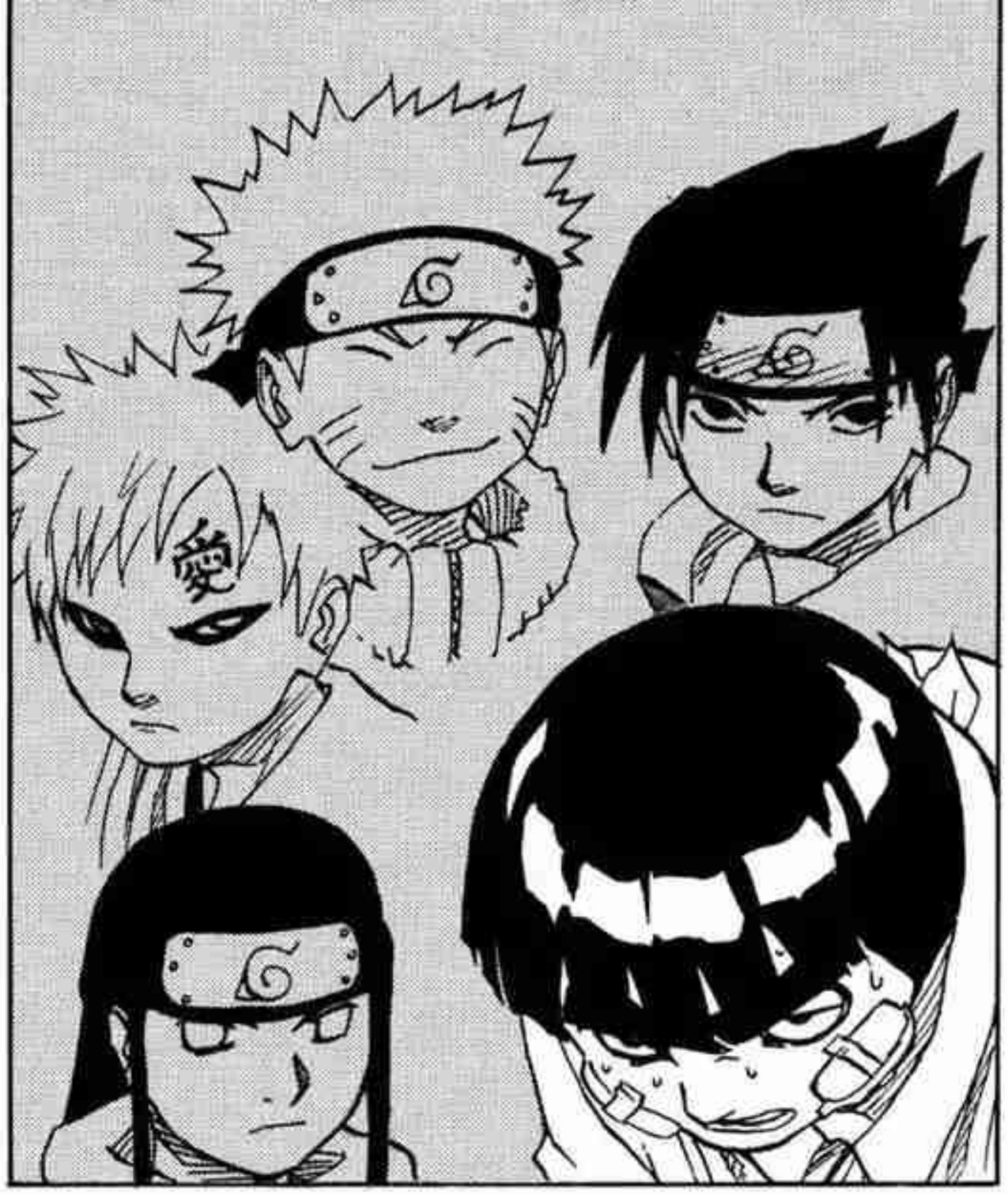
HUF

PLEASE BE QUIET AND LEAVE ME ALONE!

...LEE!

YOU'RE IN NO CON-DITION TO...

LEE! PLEASE... STOP!!



...

...

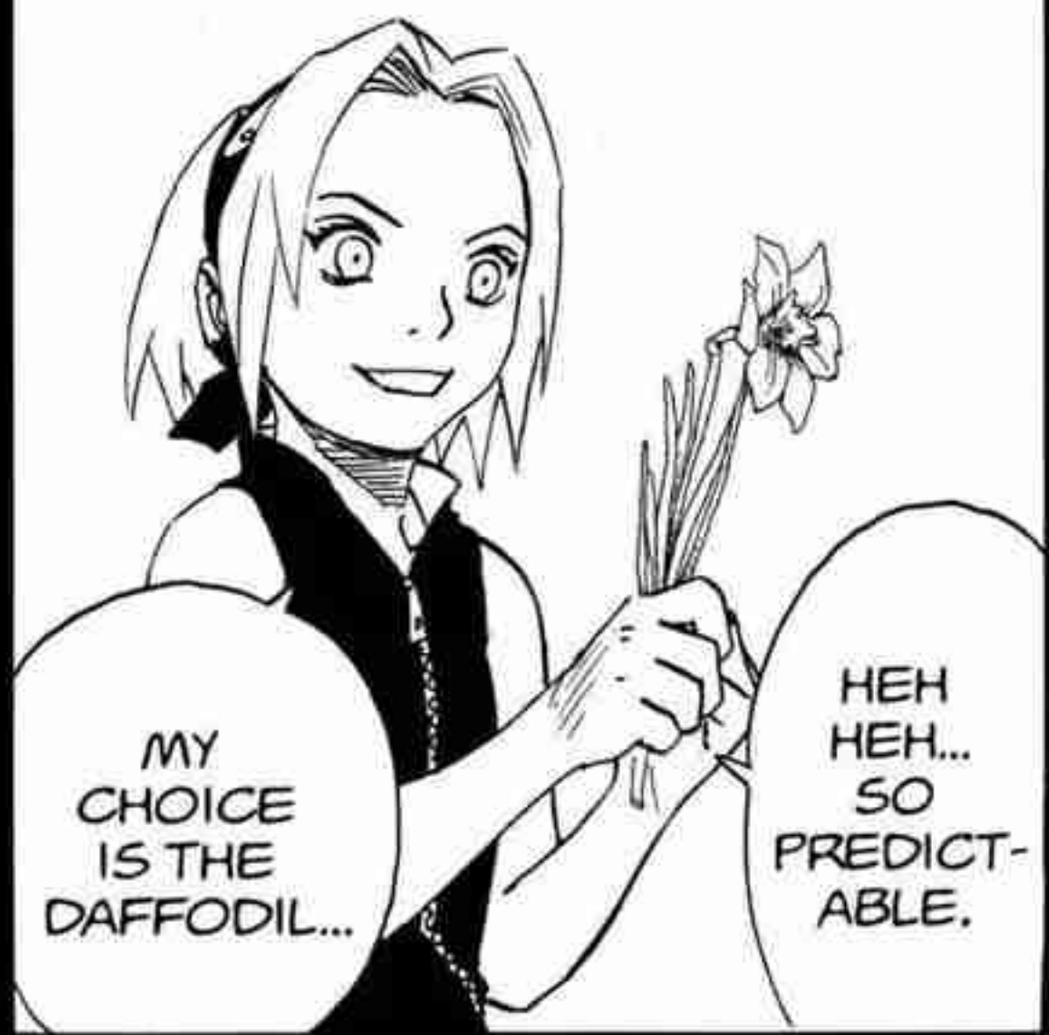
HUF
...NOT FINISHED YET...
HUF
I AM STILL...

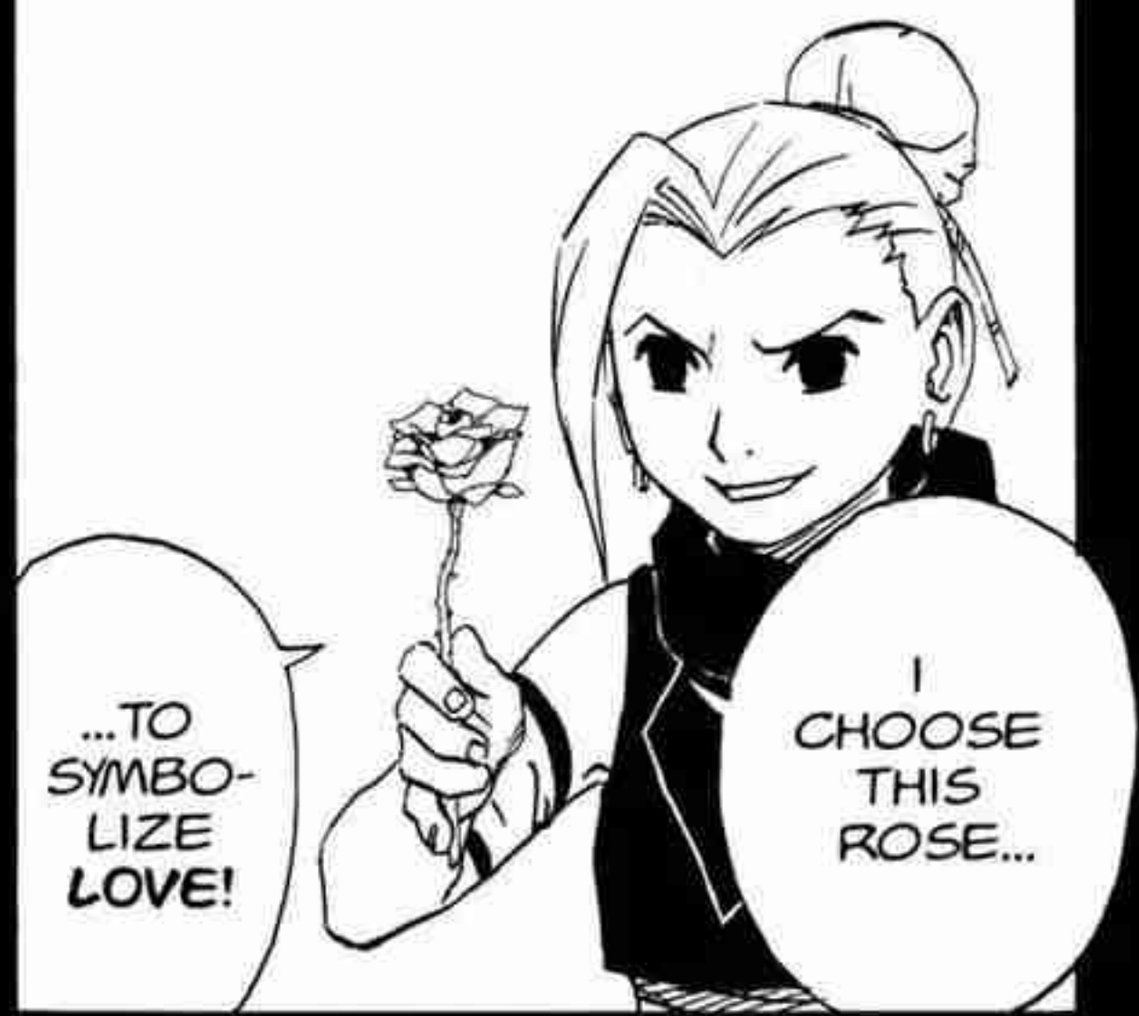
HUF
HUF
...EVER GIVE UP!!
NEVER... I WILL NOT...

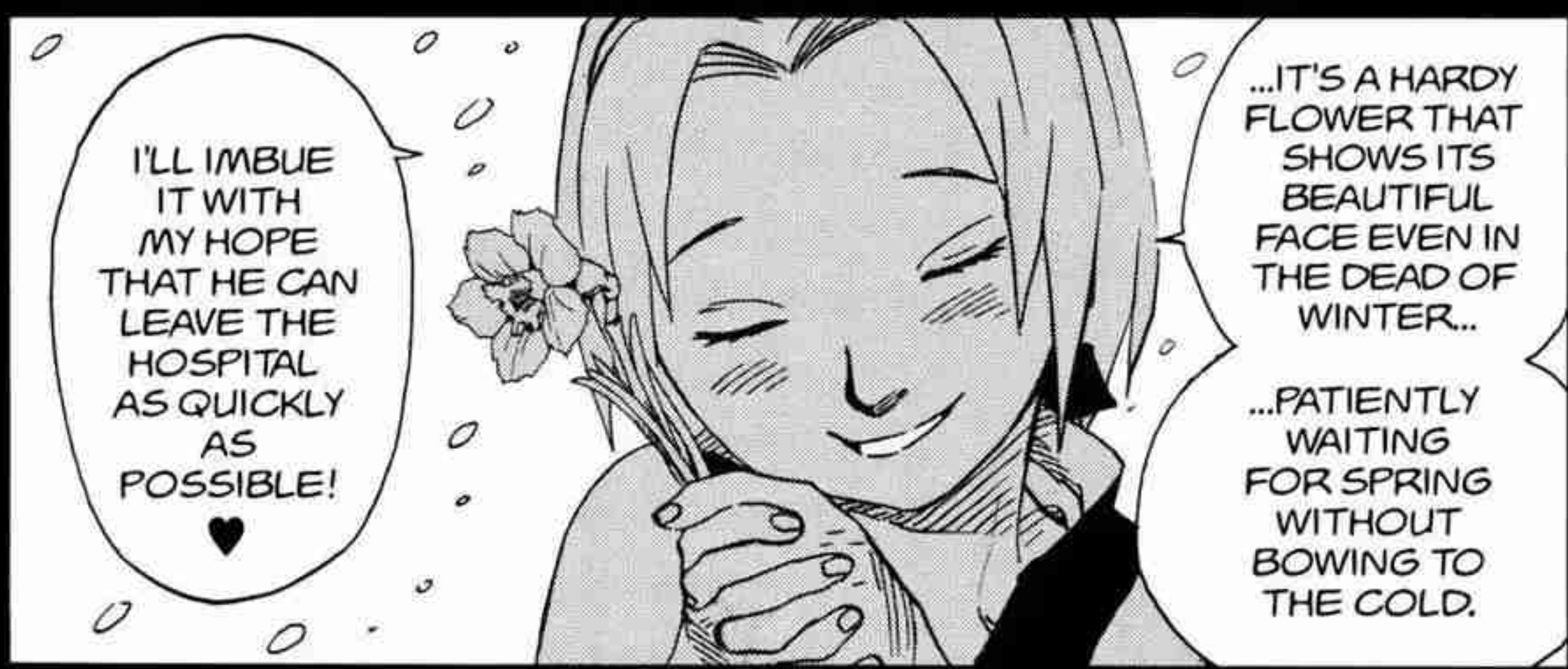
...UNLESS YOU BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!
ALL YOUR HARD WORK WILL PROVE WORTH-LESS...

YAMANAKA FLOWERS
花 やまなか
OPEN
LEE...

...THE BEST CHOICE IS CUT FLOWERS. WHICH ONES SHOULD I GET...?
IT'S BAD LUCK TO BUY A POTTED PLANT FOR SOMEONE WHO'S IN THE HOSPITAL*, SO...
HOW UNUSUAL, THAT YOU WOULD COME TO BUY OUR FLOWERS...
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS...
N...NOT REALLY...
*THIS IS BECAUSE THE WORD FOR "ROOTED" ("NETSUKU") IS PRONOUNCED THE SAME AS "BEDRIDDEN."
NUDGE
UGH... INO, YOU WRETCHED PIGLET...
I'M GOING WITH YOU!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET A LEG UP ON ME!
FLINCH
AHA! YOU'RE GOING TO GO VISIT SASUKE, AREN'T YOU?!


MY CHOICE IS THE DAFFODIL...
HEH HEH... SO PREDICT-ABLE.


...TO SYMBO-LIZE LOVE!
I CHOOSE THIS ROSE...


I'LL IMBUE IT WITH MY HOPE THAT HE CAN LEAVE THE HOSPITAL AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE! ♥
...IT'S A HARDY FLOWER THAT SHOWS ITS BEAUTIFUL FACE EVEN IN THE DEAD OF WINTER...
...PATIENTLY WAITING FOR SPRING WITHOUT BOWING TO THE COLD.

NO...
THE SECOND ONE IS FOR LEE!

I TOLD YOU I WASN'T GOING TO LOSE TO YOU!
WHAT ARE YOU NOW, SOME KIND OF FLOWER EXPERT?!

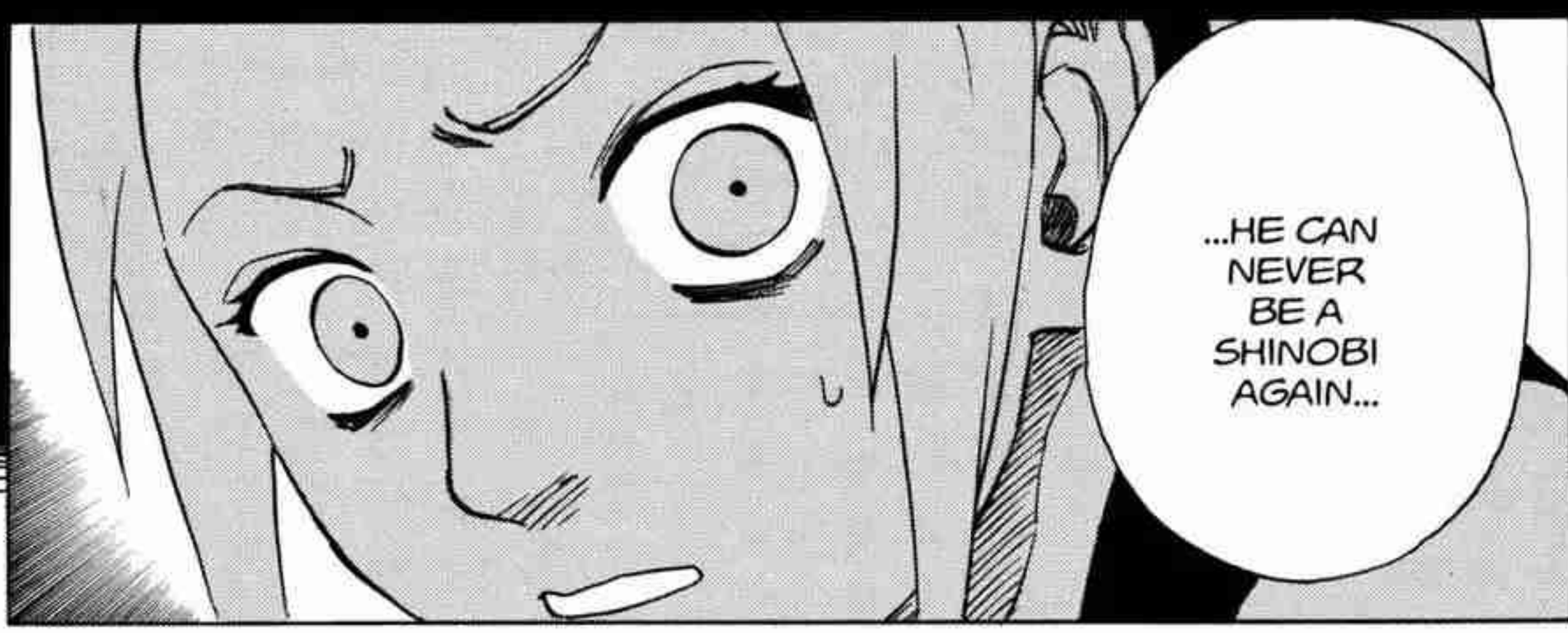
WHY? YOU ONLY NEED ONE--
ACTUALLY, I'M GOING TO GET TWO...

HUH?
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

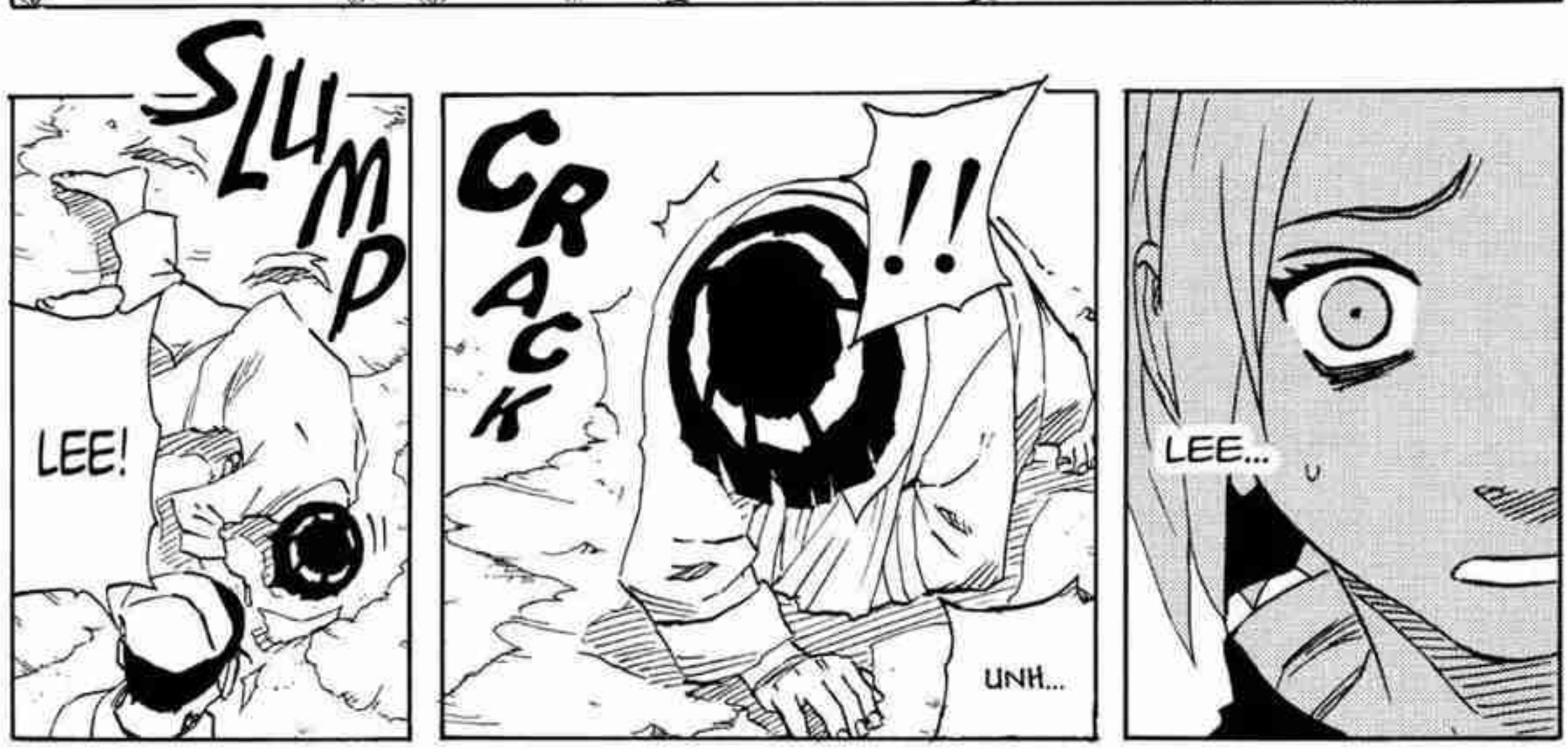
SAKURA... DID YOU HEAR WHAT THEY'VE BEEN SAYING ABOUT LEE?
...OH! RIGHT...

...

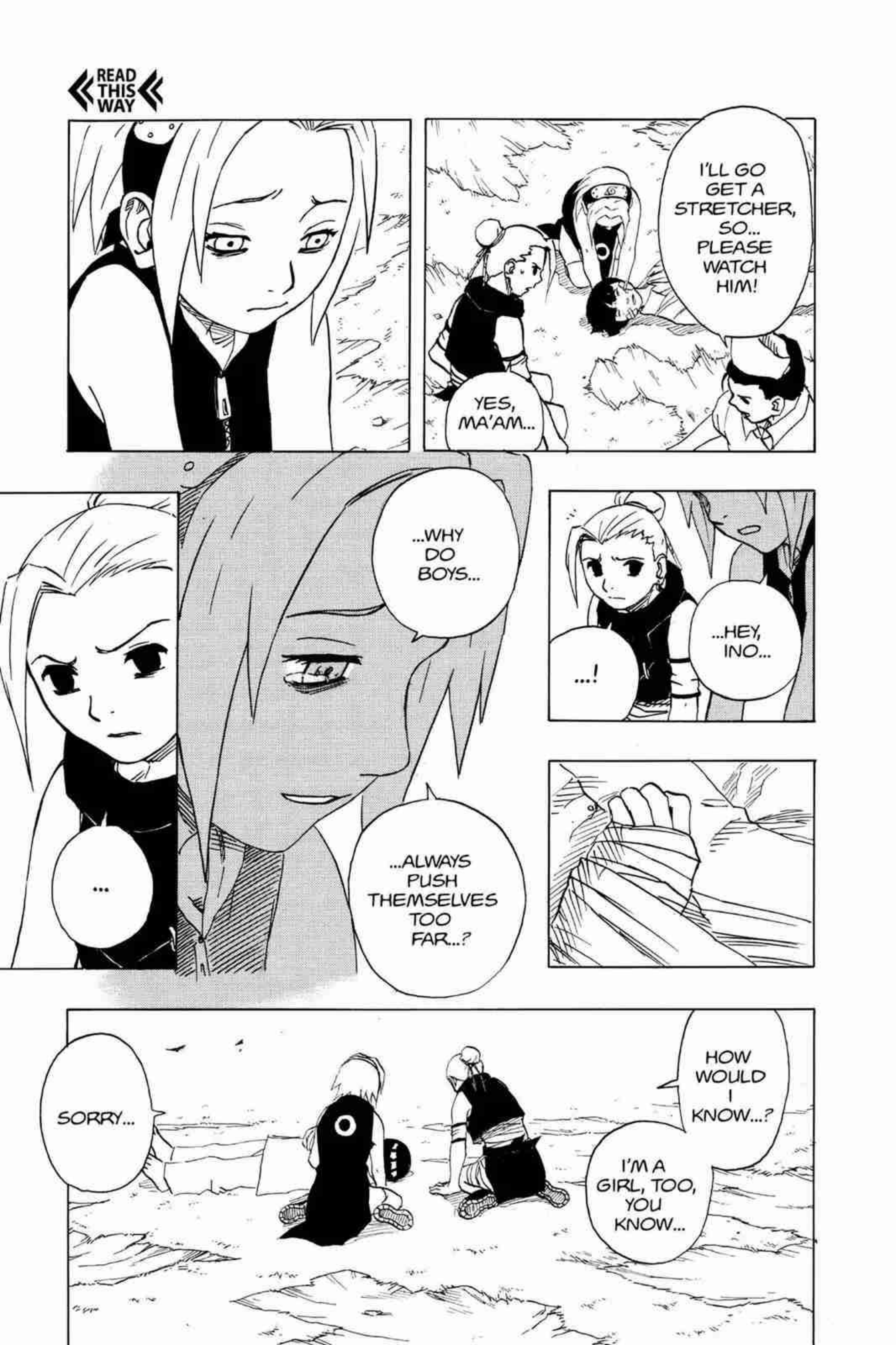
...LEE ...HIS INJURIES WERE SO SEVERE...
IT'S THAT...


...HE CAN NEVER BE A SHINOBI AGAIN...

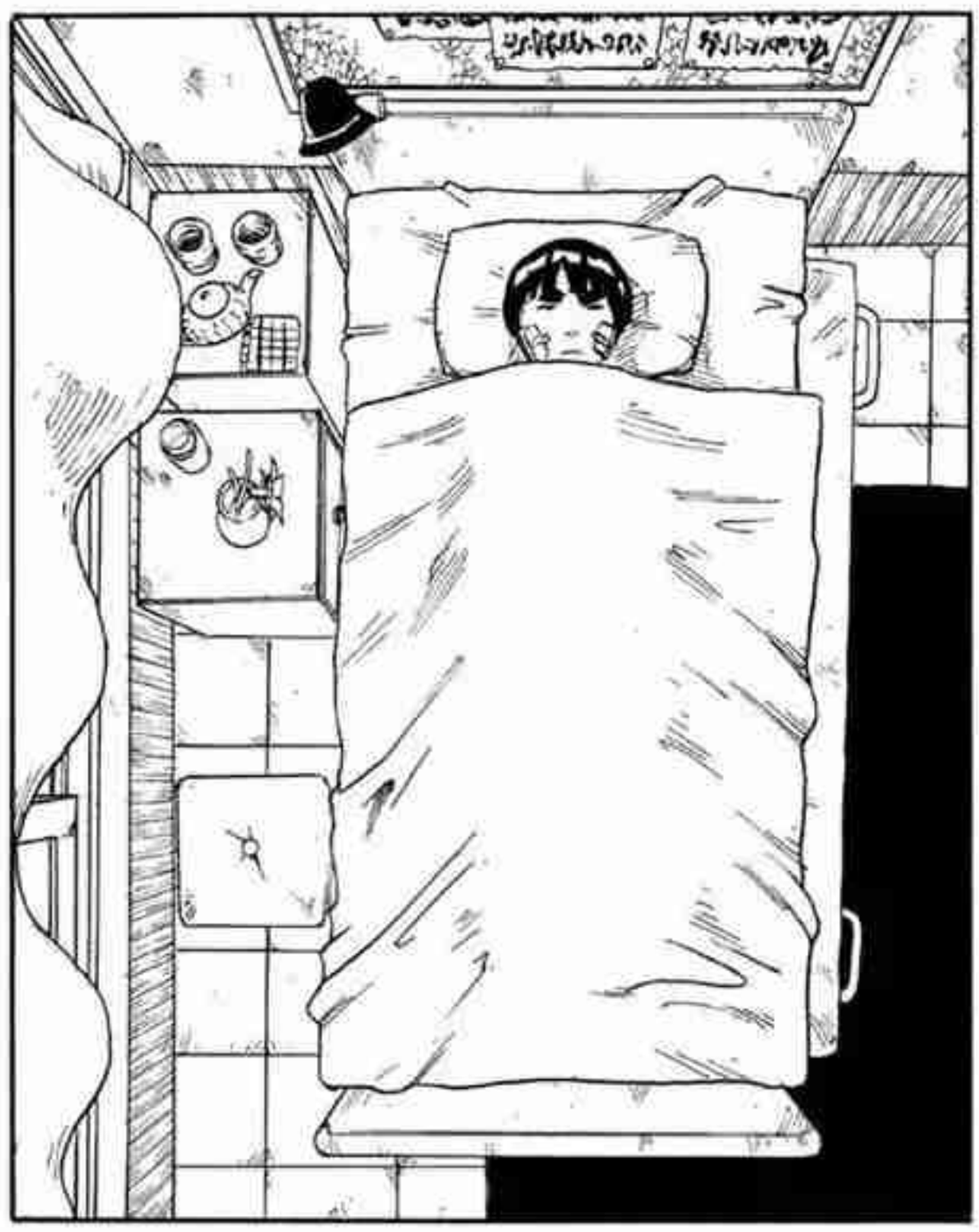
...199...


SLUMP
LEE!
CRACK
!!
UNH...
LEE...

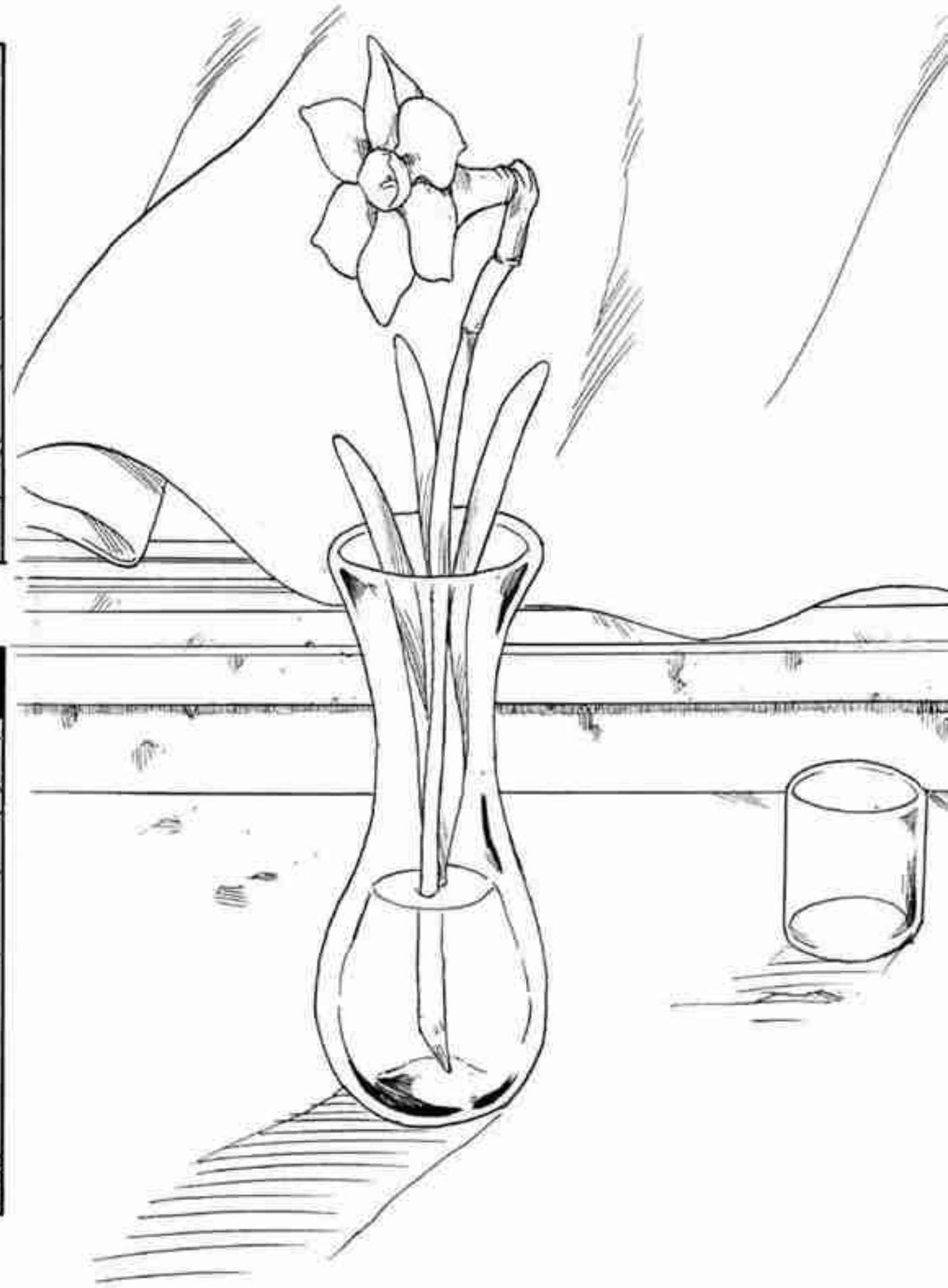
SKF
LEE...!


READ THIS WAY
YES, MA'AM...
I'LL GO GET A STRETCHER, SO... PLEASE WATCH HIM!
...!
...HEY, INO...
...
...WHY DO BOYS...
...ALWAYS PUSH THEMSELVES TOO FAR...?
SORRY...
HOW WOULD I KNOW...?
I'M A GIRL, TOO, YOU KNOW...

FLUTTER



BLINK
HUH ?



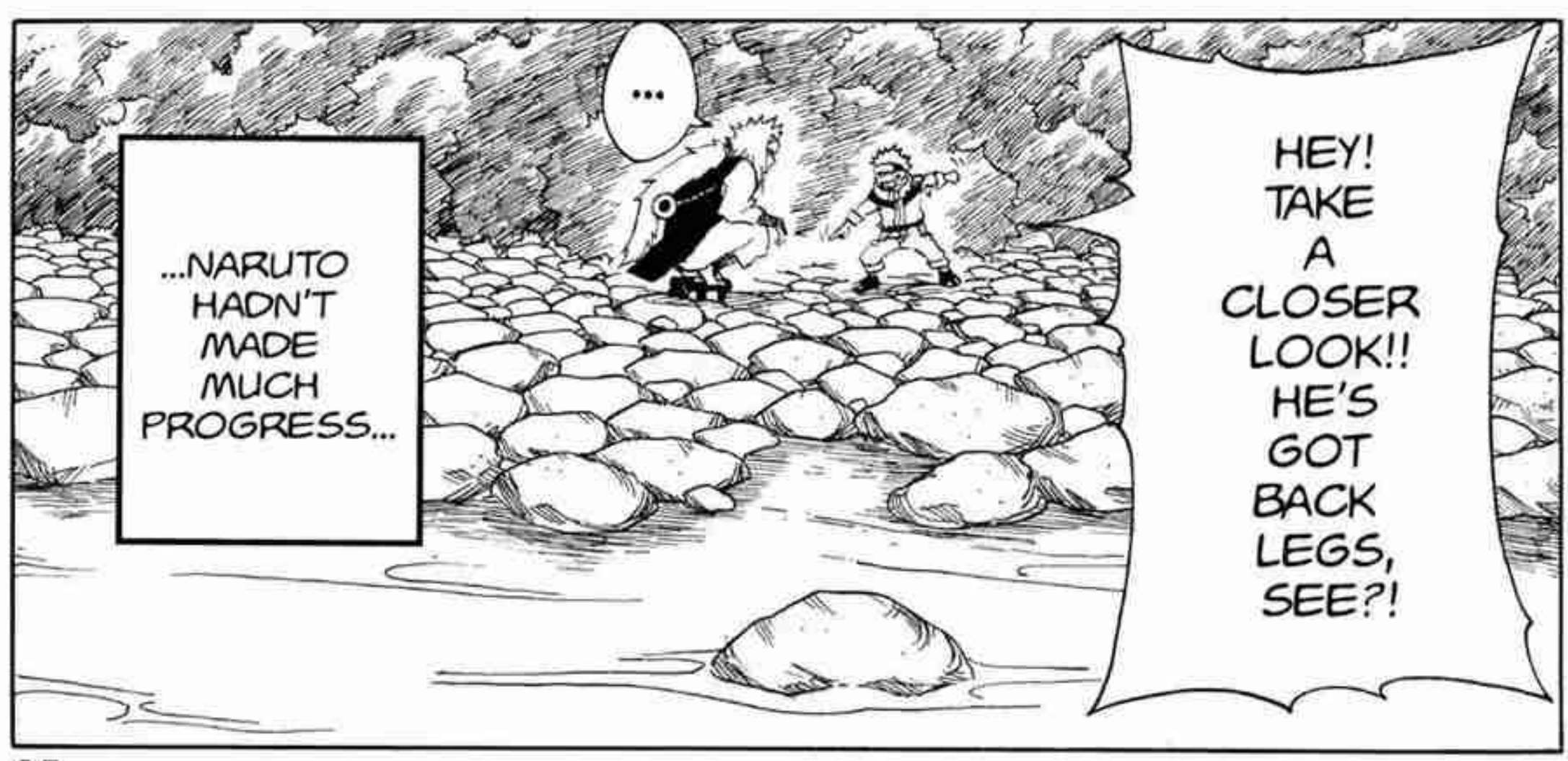
I WONDER... WHO...?

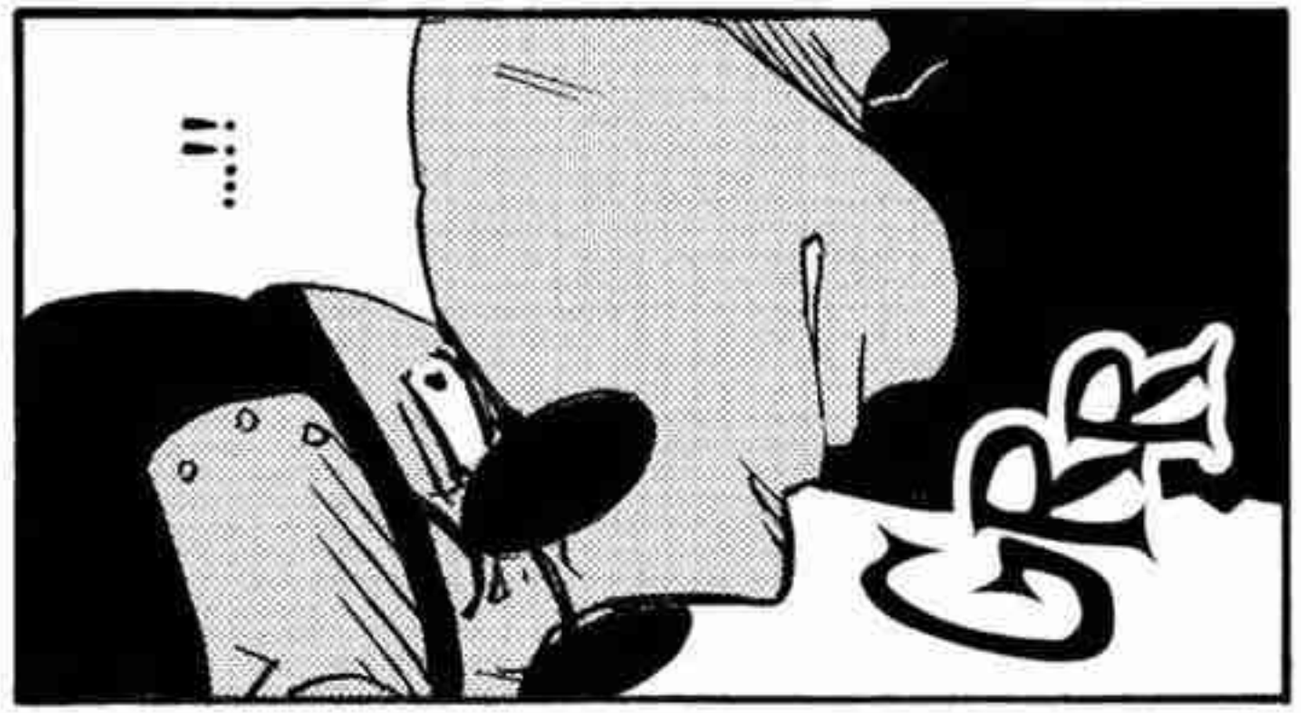
FLOP FLOP
TWITCH
TWITCH

MEANWHILE ...
ALL RIGHT! YES!!

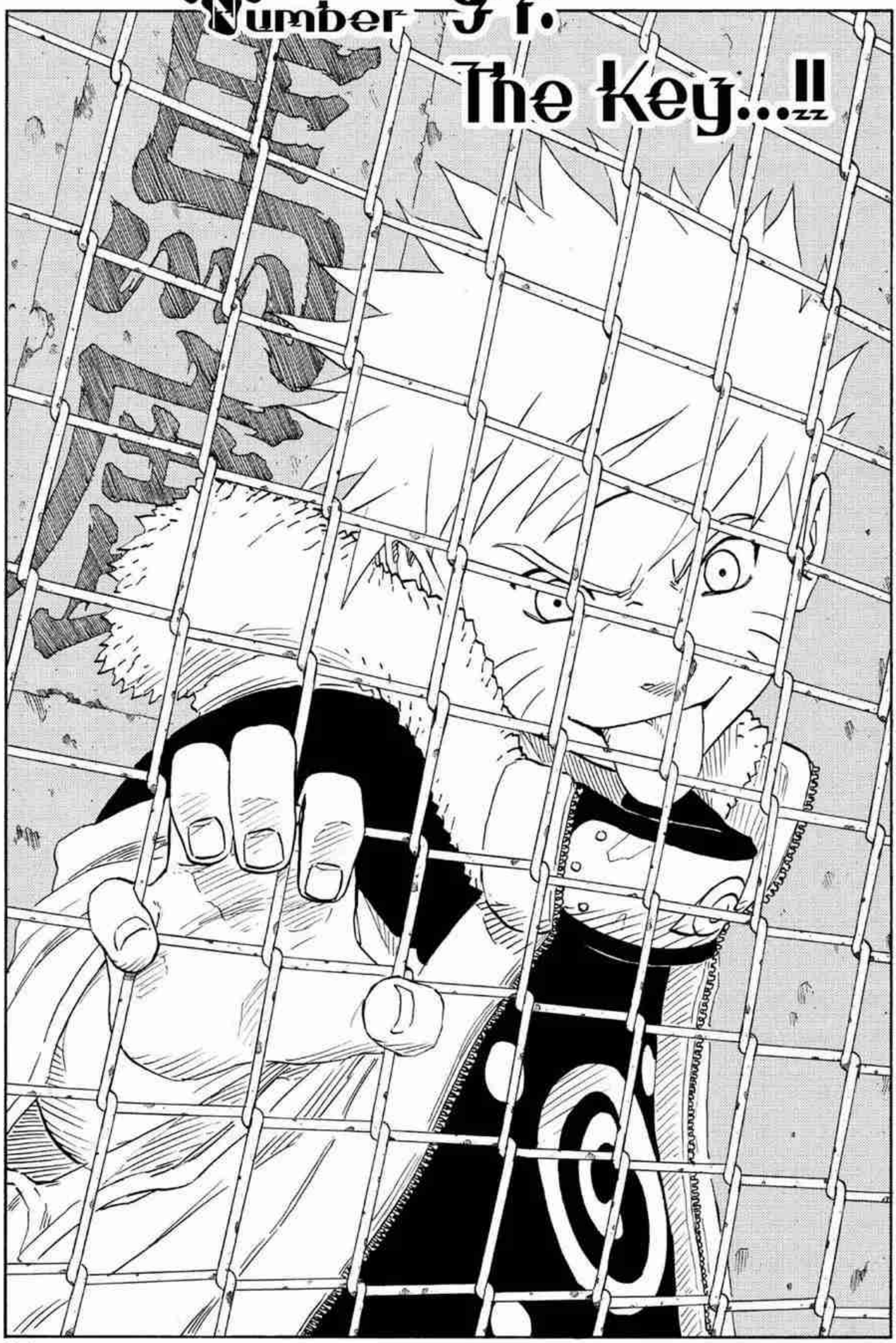
JAB

AARGH! JUST DIE, WILL YOU?! YOU TALENTLESS DIMWIT!!


...NARUTO HADN'T MADE MUCH PROGRESS...
...
HEY! TAKE A CLOSER LOOK!! HE'S GOT BACK LEGS, SEE?!


ぐるぐる
…!

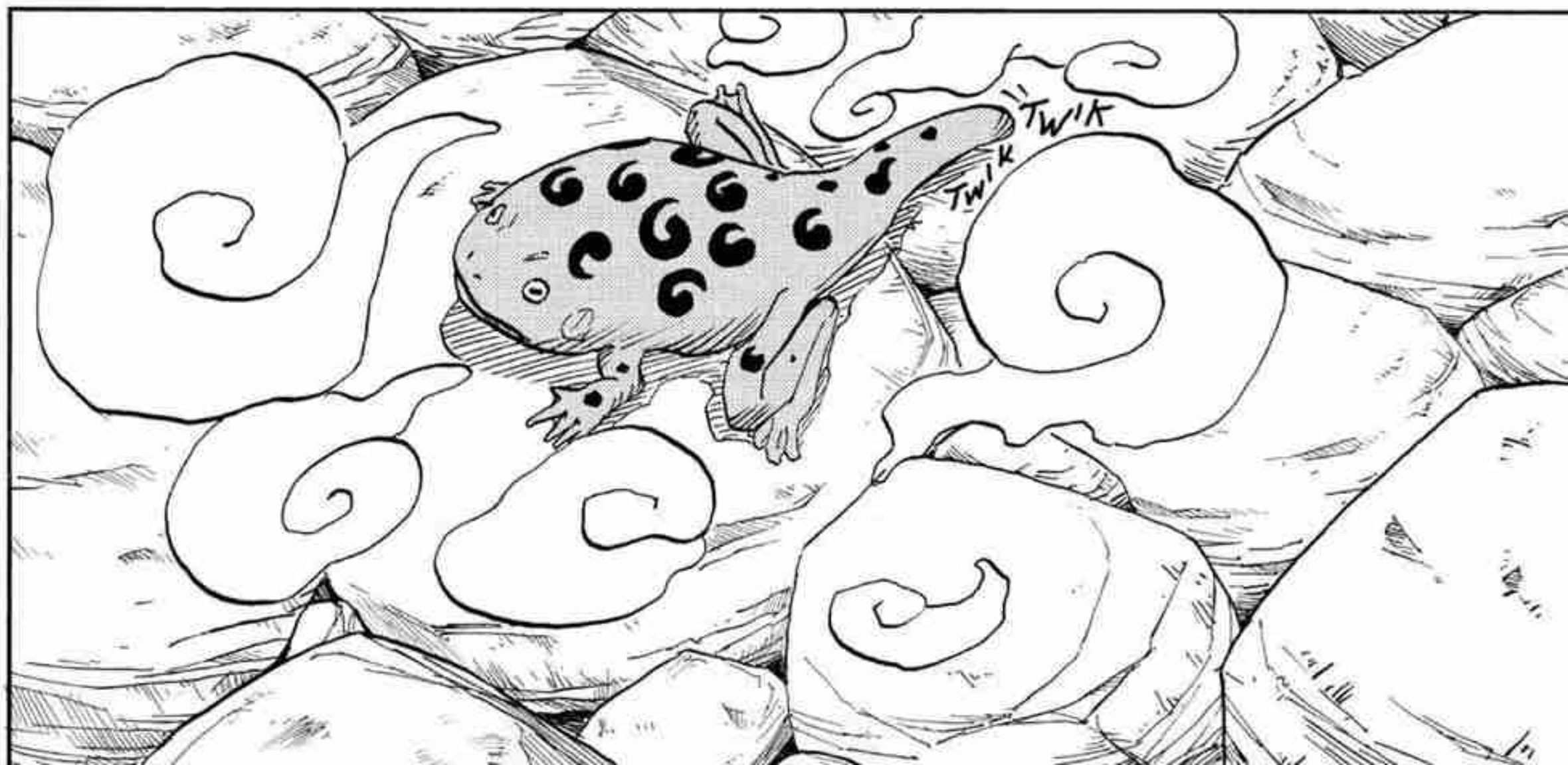
Number 94: The Key...!! zz



KUCHIYOSE NO JUTSU! THE ART OF SUMMONING!
THREE WEEKS SINCE THE START OF TRAINING...
BOOM

HUF
HUF
...IT'S GOTTA BE A FROG THIS TIME!
WAFT
WAFT

FWOOOSH
WHEE!
WAHH


TWIK
TWIK

READ THIS WAY
AH HA HA!
...BETWEEN A FROG AND A TADPOLE, ANYWAY?!
WHAT'S THE DIFFER-ENCE...
AAARGH!
...
TWIK TWIK
COULD YOU BE A LITTLE MORE SUPPORTIVE?!
JAB
WHEE WHEE
HA HA HA!
OH...
WOBBLE

...HE'S BEEN SLOGGING THROUGH PRETTY MUCH ON WILLPOWER ALONE.
...I SUPPOSE IT'S TO BE EXPECTED. FOR THE LAST 21 DAYS...

SIGH...
油
HE COLLAPSED AGAIN...?

...THE CHAKRA OF THE NINE-TAILED FOX... WHENEVER HE WANTS.
CLOP
CLOP
IT'S NO EASY TASK, DEVELOPING THE ABILITY TO ACCESS AND CONTROL...

I IMAGINE NARUTO'S BODY NORMALLY SUPPRESSES THE FOX SPIRIT'S POWER TO AVOID STRAIN.
AND THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT HIS BODY IS TOO SMALL TO COMPLETELY CONTAIN THE MONSTER'S CHAKRA...

...IS A SUDDEN EMOTIONAL RUSH OR PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO NARUTO'S FLESH...
HOIST
SO IF THE KEY TO DRAWING OUT THE FOX'S CHAKRA...

...

FORGIVE ME, FOURTH HOKAGE...!

...THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO TEACH HIM HOW TO USE THAT KEY... THE HARD WAY!

FUP

LORD HOKAGE?

YOU'RE RUINING THE FACT THAT YOU RETURNED FROM THE FOREST OF DEATH ALIVE, NO...?

I'M SO SORRY, I...

...

...ANKO...?

YOU AND OROCHIMARU NO LONGER SHARE ANY RELATIONSHIP. YOU OWE US NOTHING...

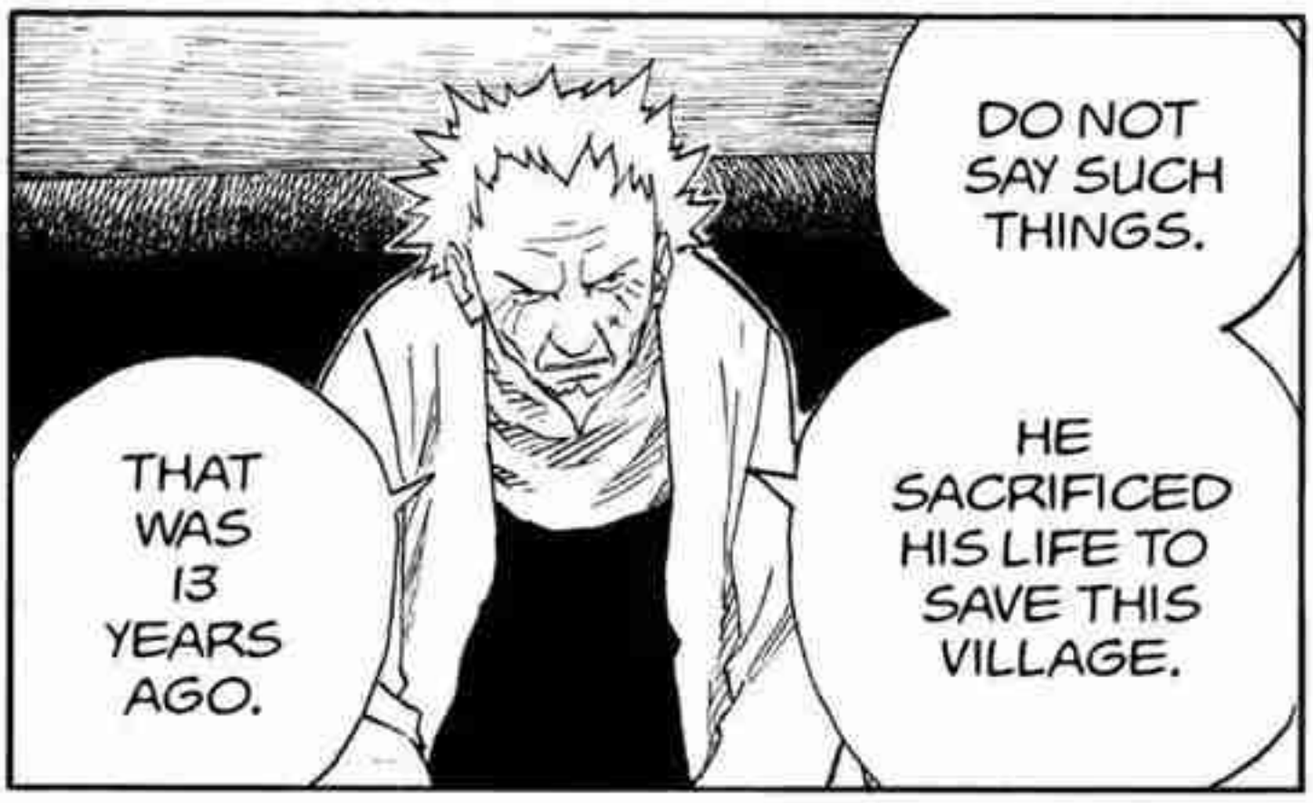
...DON'T.

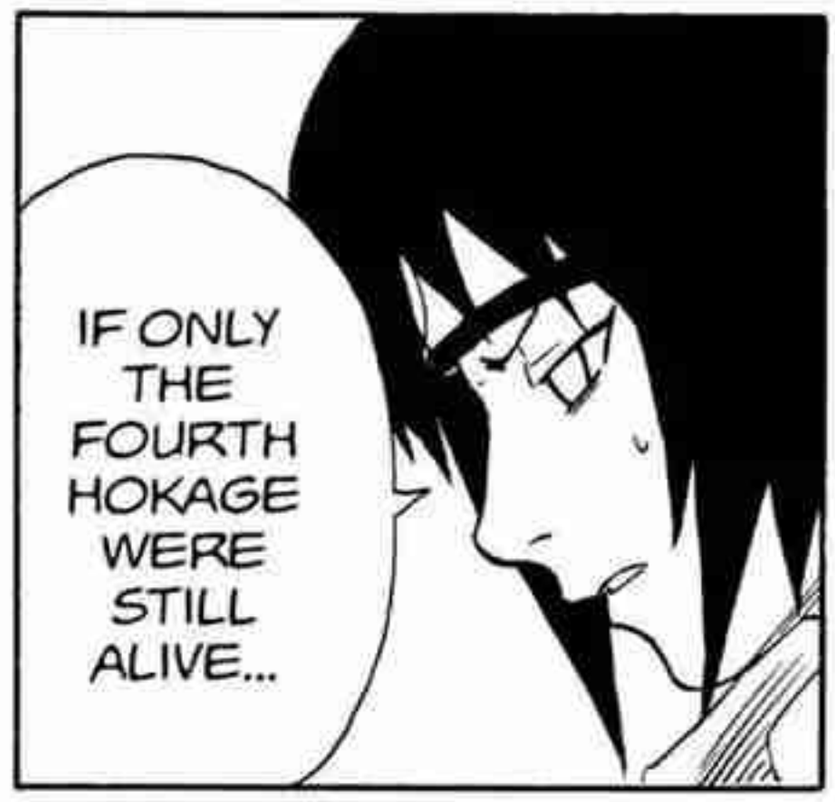
...

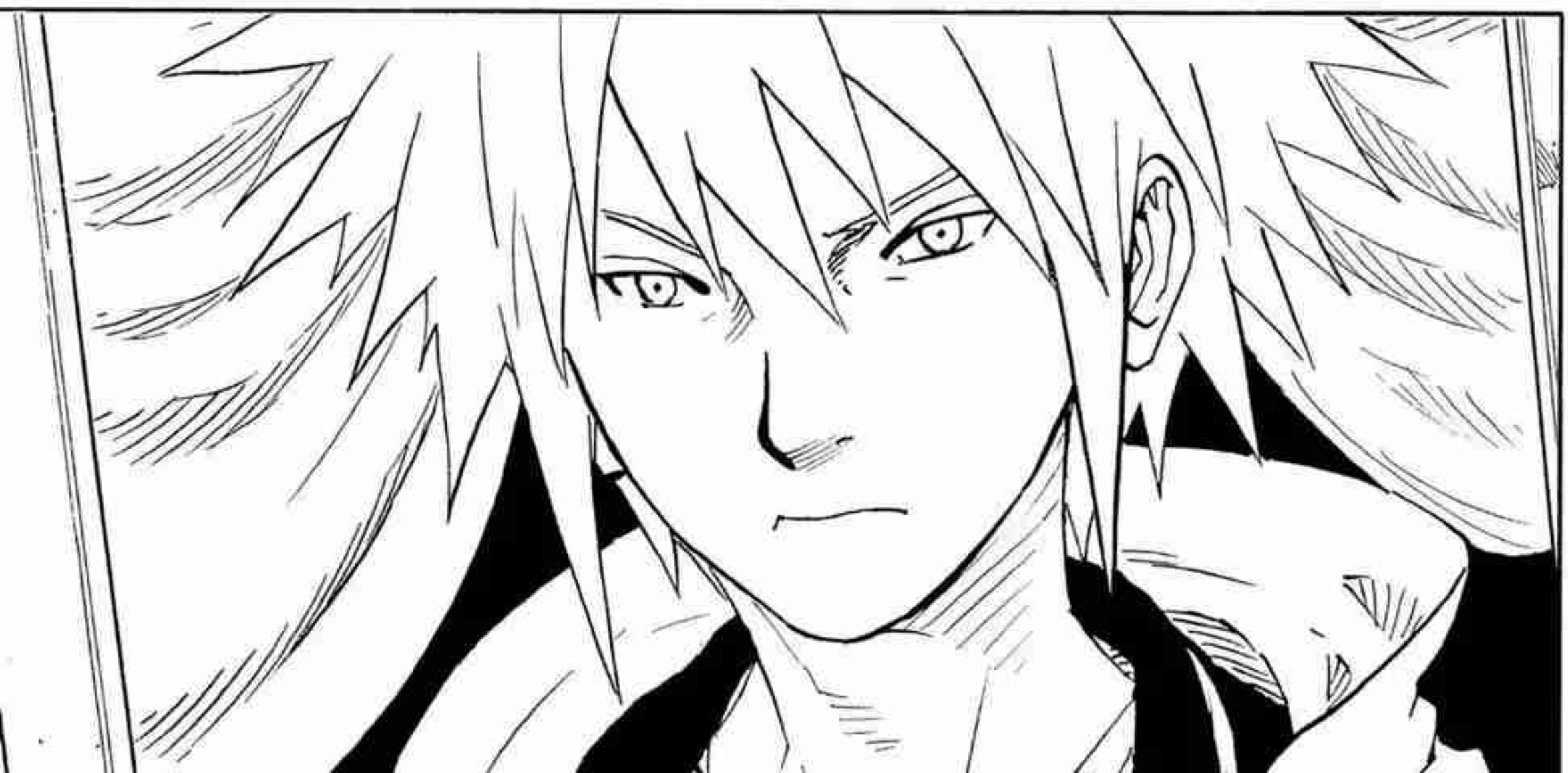
...

BESIDES, NONE OF THE SHINOBI IN KONOHA RIGHT NOW...
...ARE ANY THREAT TO HIM.

I SUSPECT THAT NOT EVEN I COULD FACE HIM.


DO NOT SAY SUCH THINGS.
HE SACRIFICED HIS LIFE TO SAVE THIS VILLAGE.
THAT WAS 13 YEARS AGO.


IF ONLY THE FOURTH HOKAGE WERE STILL ALIVE...



SHF

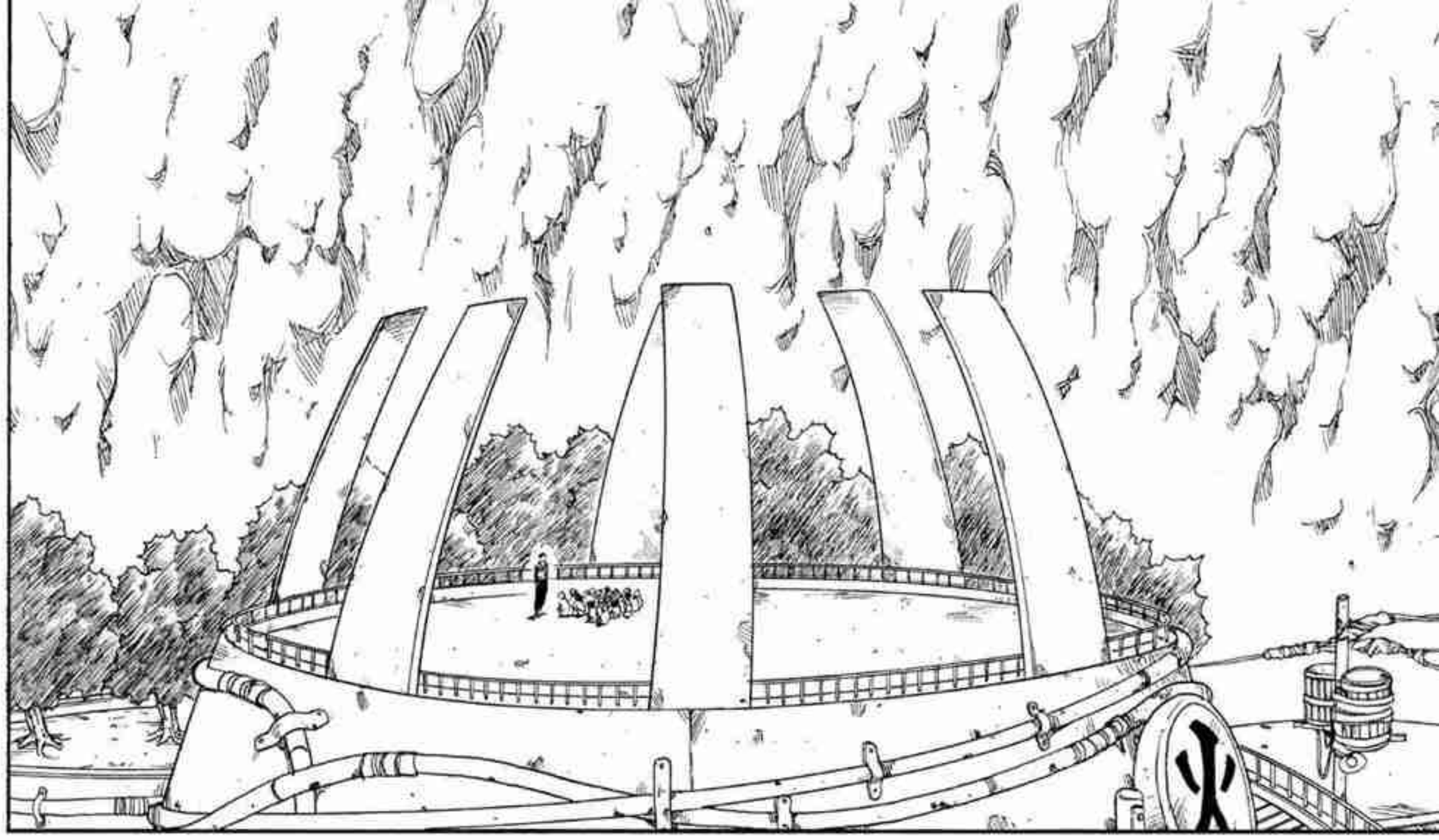
...SO WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN... WITH WHAT WE HAVE.

...HE IS NO LONGER WITH US...

YOU MUST NOT BLAME YOURSELF.

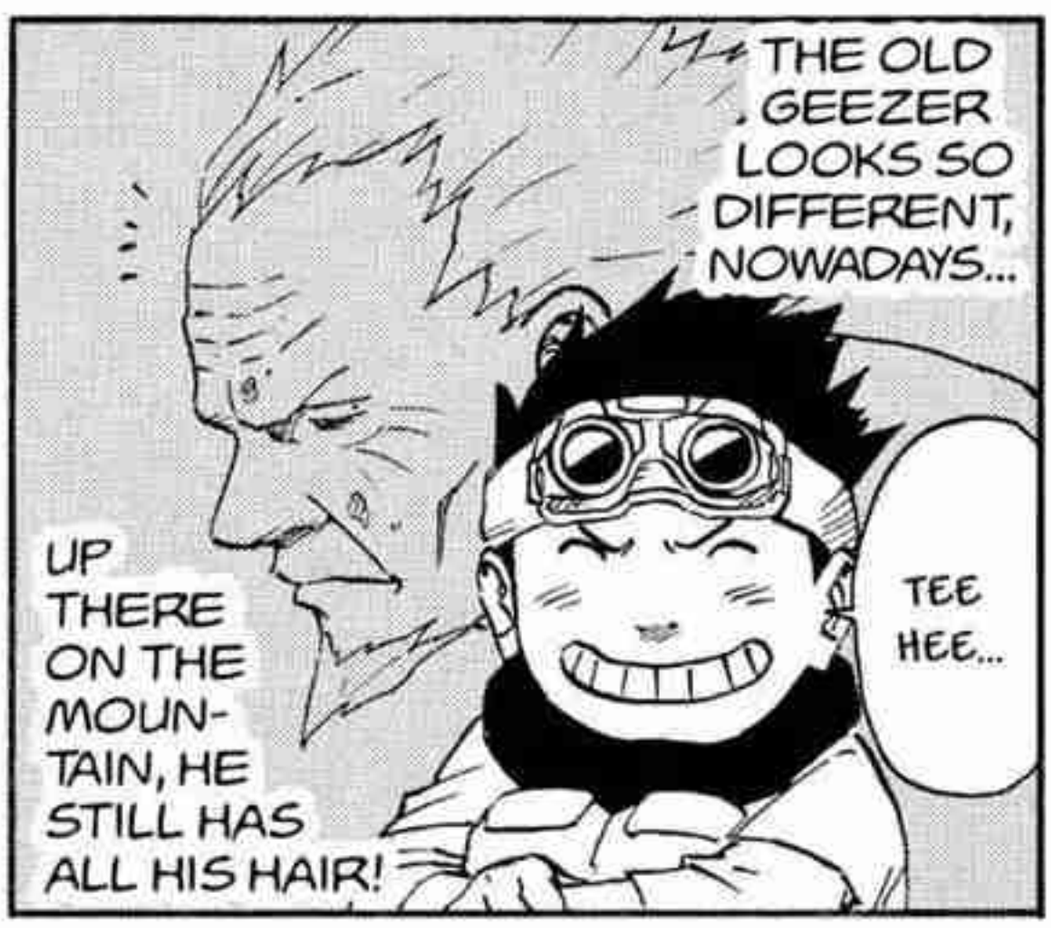
I'M GOING TO GET SOME FRESH AIR...

...YES, SIR.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT IN ORDER ARE THE FIRST, SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH--
AS YOU ALL KNOW, THESE STONE IMAGES DEPICT THE FACES OF ALL THE PAST AND PRESENT HOKAGE.

TODAY, WE'LL HAVE OUR HISTORY LESSON OUTSIDE!


THE OLD GEEZER LOOKS SO DIFFERENT, NOWADAYS...
UP THERE ON THE MOUN-TAIN, HE STILL HAS ALL HIS HAIR!
TEE HEE...

...THE FIFTH HOKAGE...
HMM...

MASTER IRUKA!
WHO'S THE FIFTH?

HA HA...
...NO ONE'S BEEN SELECTED YET, BUT... MAYBE IT'LL BE ME!

EXCELLENT LECTURE, IRUKA!
AHA, YES! IT'S GOOD TO INDULGE IN THE OCCASIONAL JOKE...

I JUST FELT LIKE PAYING THE MONUMENT A VISIT, THAT'S ALL.

HEY! GRAMPS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, HUH?
OH! IT'S THE THIRD HOKAGE!
...L-LORD HOKAGE...!

TAK
...THE THIRD LORD HOKAGE!
THIS IS THE VERY PERSON WHOSE FACE IS ABOVE YOU, THIRD FROM THE LEFT...

YOU'VE COME AT A PERFECT TIME, SIR.
PLEASE, OVER HERE...
ALL RIGHT.

...AND IT'S SAID THAT HE POSSESSED SUPERLATIVE STRENGTH, EVEN COMPARED TO THE OTHER HOKAGE!
THE THIRD HOKAGE WAS A GENIUS WHO WAS NICKNAMED "THE PROFESSOR"...

YEP! YOU GOT THAT RIGHT!

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE IT!
WHAT?! ARE YOU REALLY THAT STRONG, OLD MAN?!

IRUKA! WHY ARE YOU USING THE PAST TENSE?!
AH! S...SORRY.

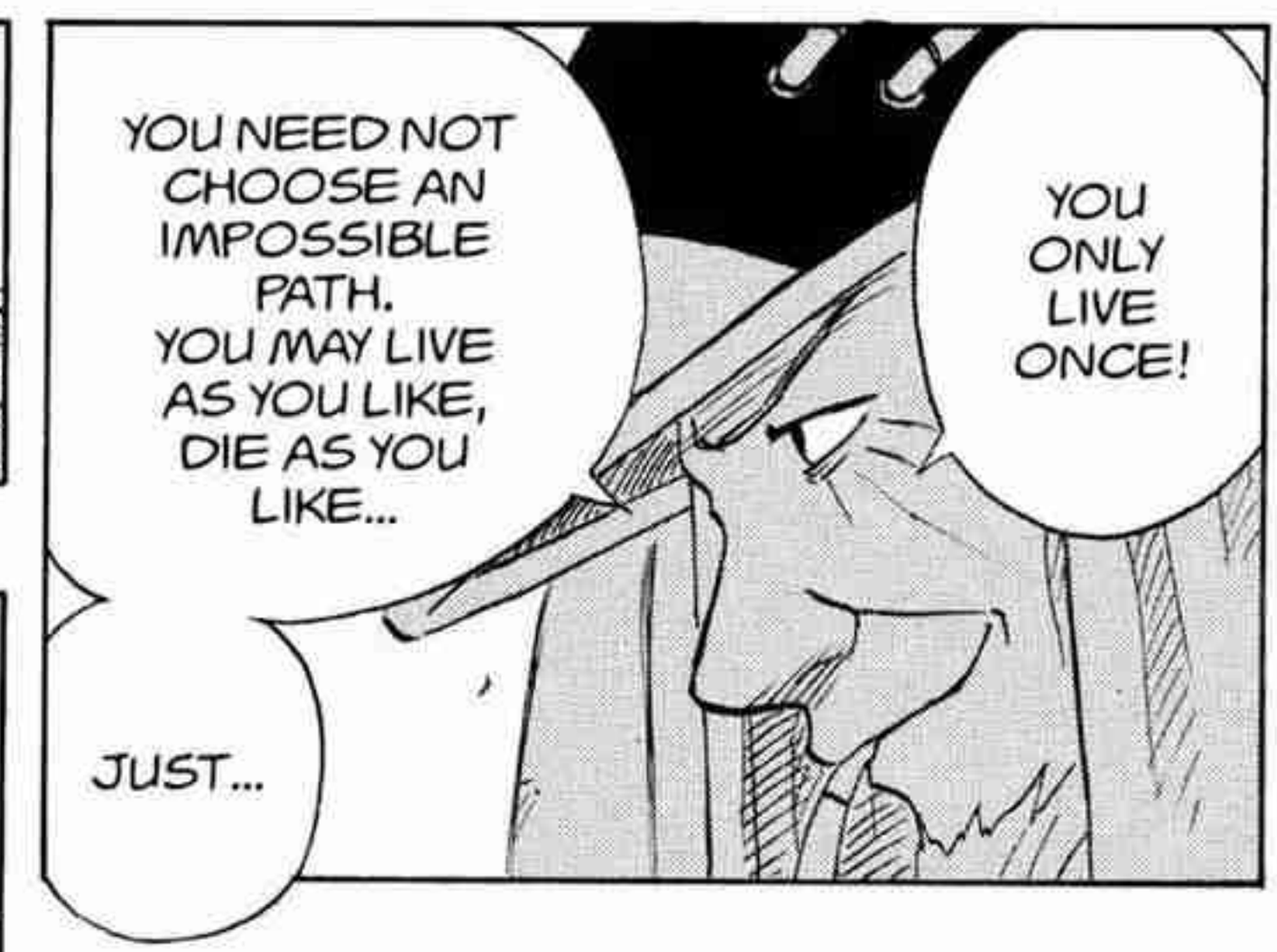
'CAUSE I'M SUPER-STRONG AND SUPER-COOL!
ALL RIGHT! THEN I'M GONNA BE THE FIFTH HOKAGE!

...YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE STRONG-EST SHINOBI IN THIS VILLAGE!
H...HEY! ALL OF YOU KNOW THAT TO BE GRANTED THE TITLE OF HOKAGE...

HO HO...! NOT WITH **YOUR** GRADES!

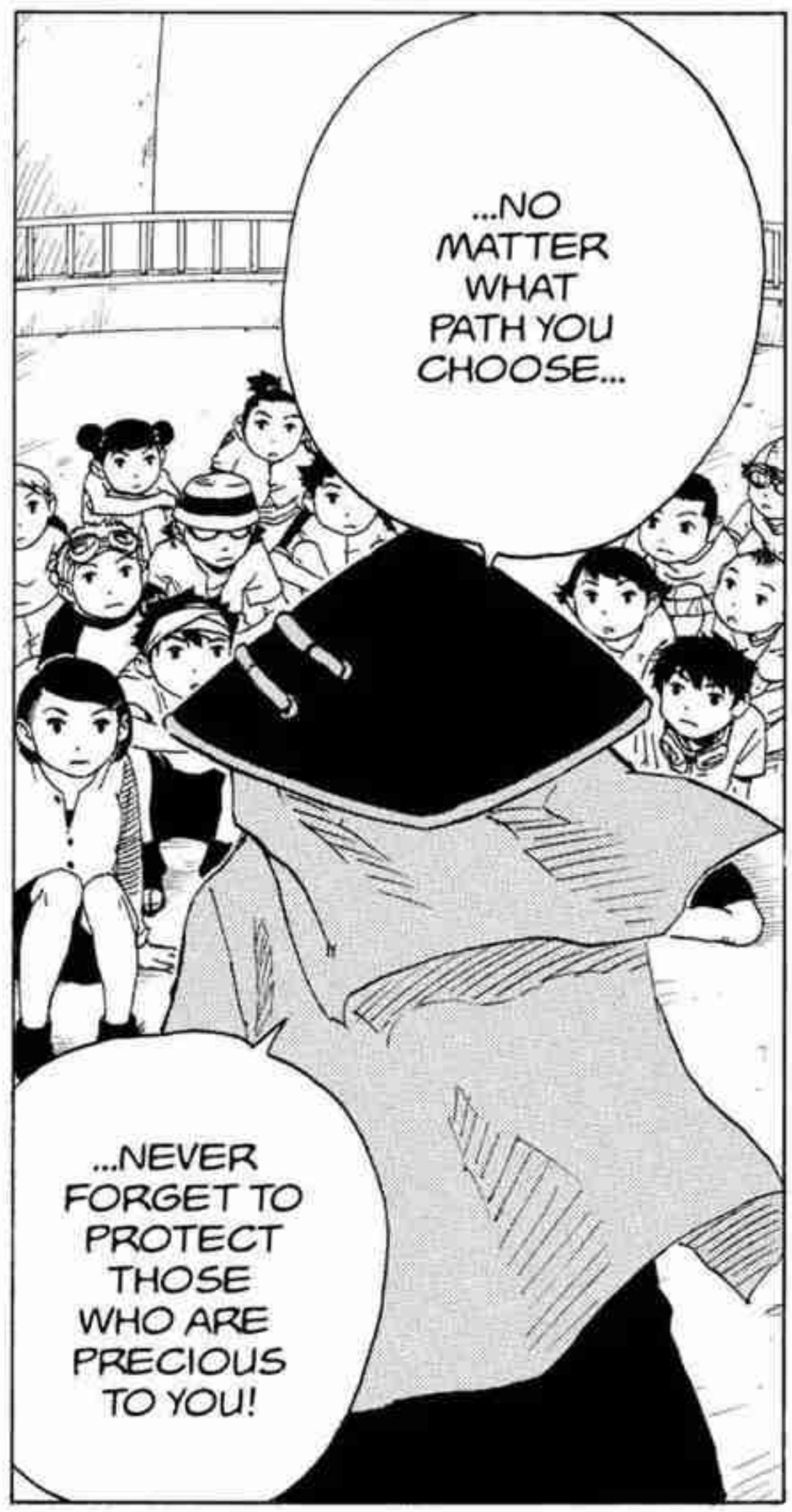
A FUTURE HOKAGE COULD VERY WELL EMERGE FROM THIS GROUP!
HA HA HA... SUCH PROMISE! UNLIKE ME, ALL OF YOU ARE SO...
...YOUNG!

...


YOU NEED NOT CHOOSE AN IMPOSSIBLE PATH. YOU MAY LIVE AS YOU LIKE, DIE AS YOU LIKE...
YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE!
JUST...

...

THOSE WHO ARE PRECIOUS TO US?


...NO MATTER WHAT PATH YOU CHOOSE...
...NEVER FORGET TO PROTECT THOSE WHO ARE PRECIOUS TO YOU!

THE PEOPLE WHO OCCUPY A SPECIAL PLACE IN YOUR HEARTS... WHOM YOU TRUST... AND LOVE.
IS THERE ANYONE LIKE THAT IN YOUR LIFE?

HEH HEH... ME TOO!
FOR ME, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE MY FRIENDS!

OH, AND... MY DOG, GONTA...
Y...YEAH... MY DAD AND MOM. AND... I HATE HIM JUST A LITTLE BIT, BUT... MY BIG BROTHER TOO.

READ
THIS
WAY

OH! WHO, WHO?
YES, OF COURSE...!

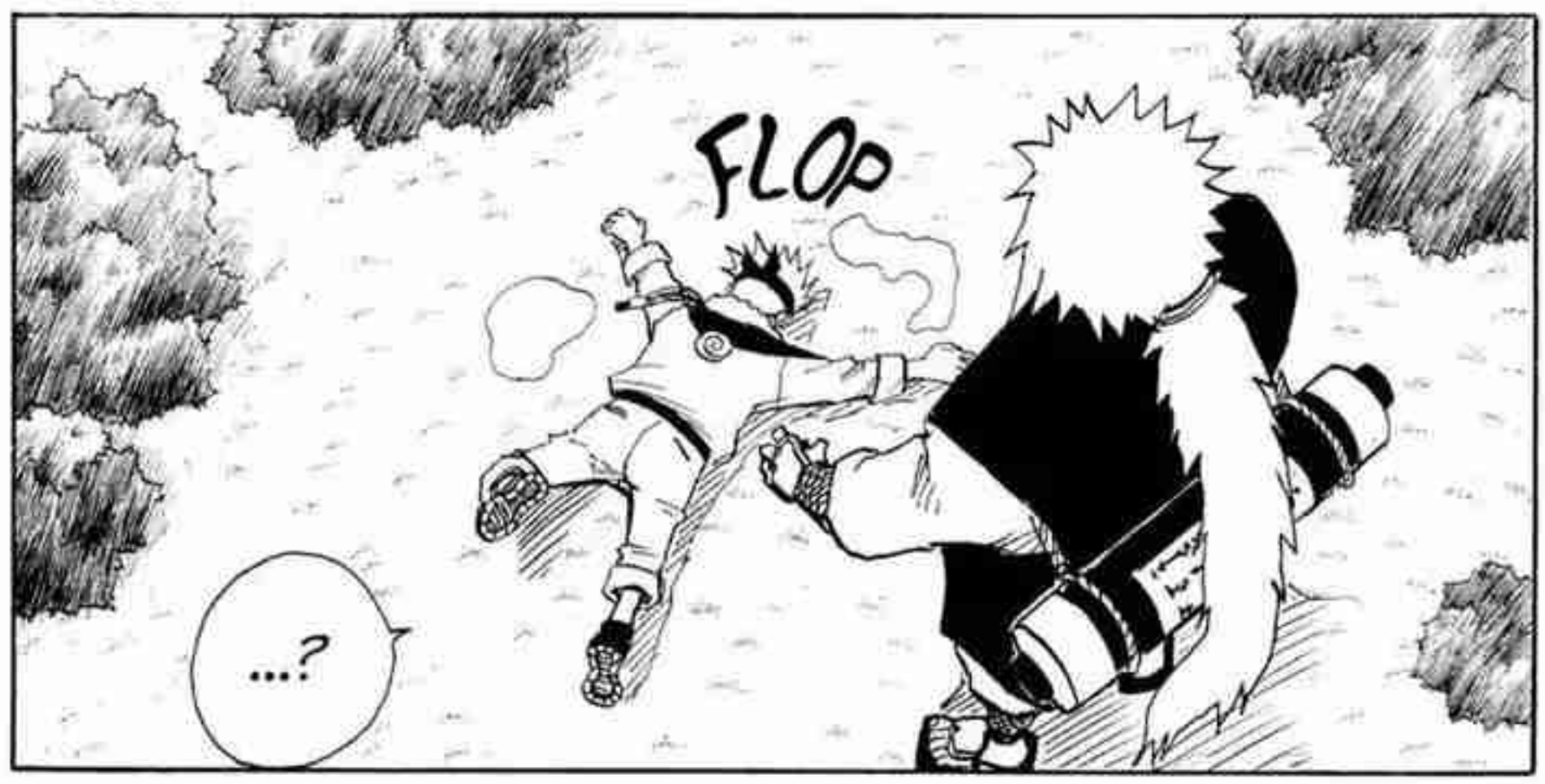
WELL... IS THERE SOMEONE LIKE THAT FOR YOU, TOO, LORD HOKAGE?

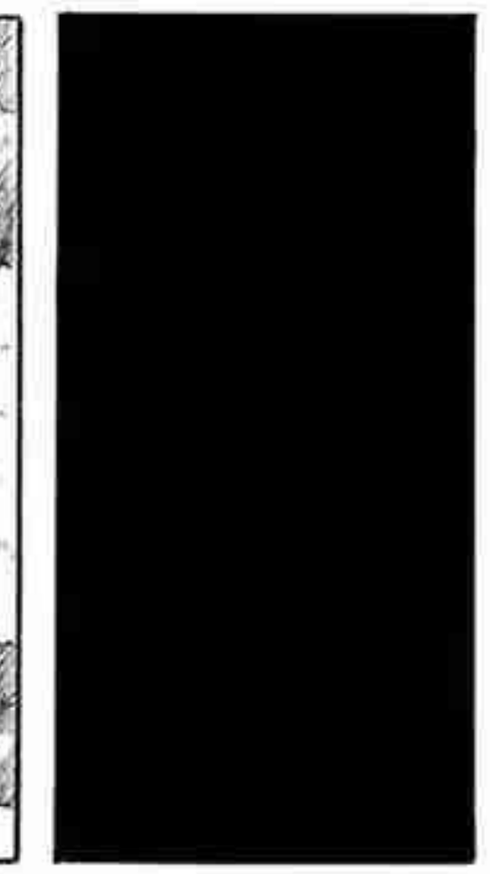
...

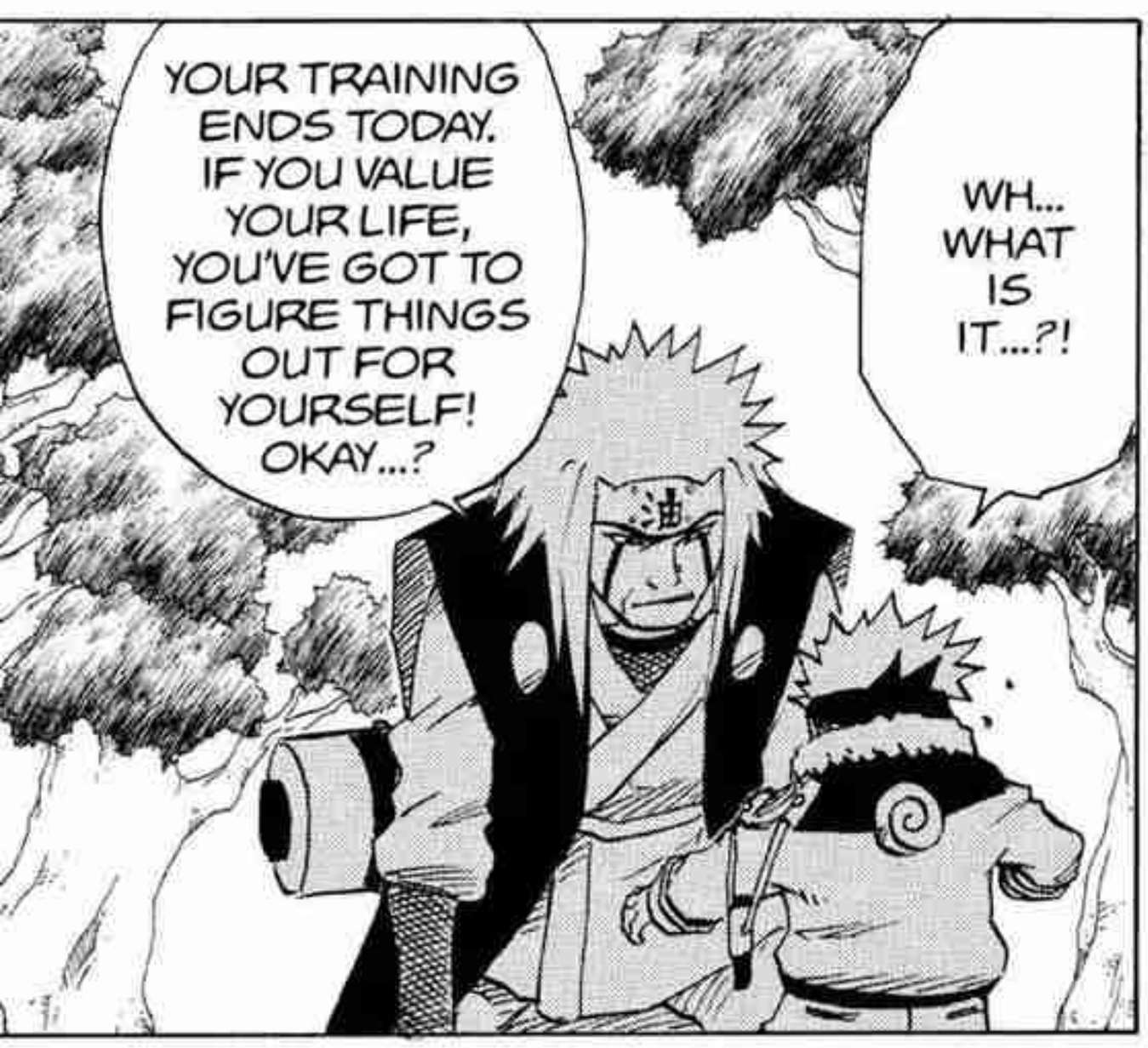
GRIN

MY GRANDSON, OVER THERE... KONOHAMARU...

AND EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU... EVERYONE IN THIS VILLAGE!


FLOP
...?




YOUR TRAINING ENDS TODAY. IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE, YOU'VE GOT TO FIGURE THINGS OUT FOR YOURSELF! OKAY...?
WH... WHAT IS IT...?!

RATTLE
HUH? WHERE AM I...?

GET UP!

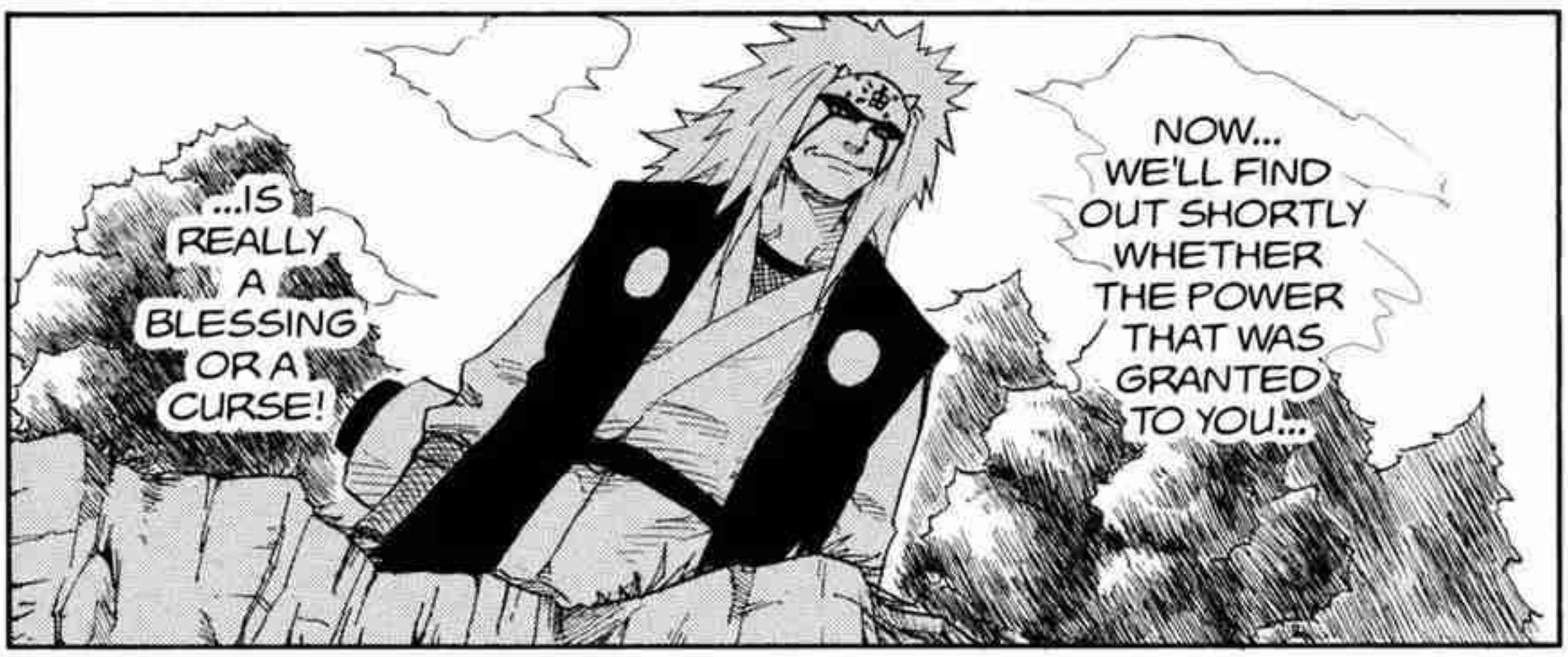
?!

CRASH

HUH?
TAP

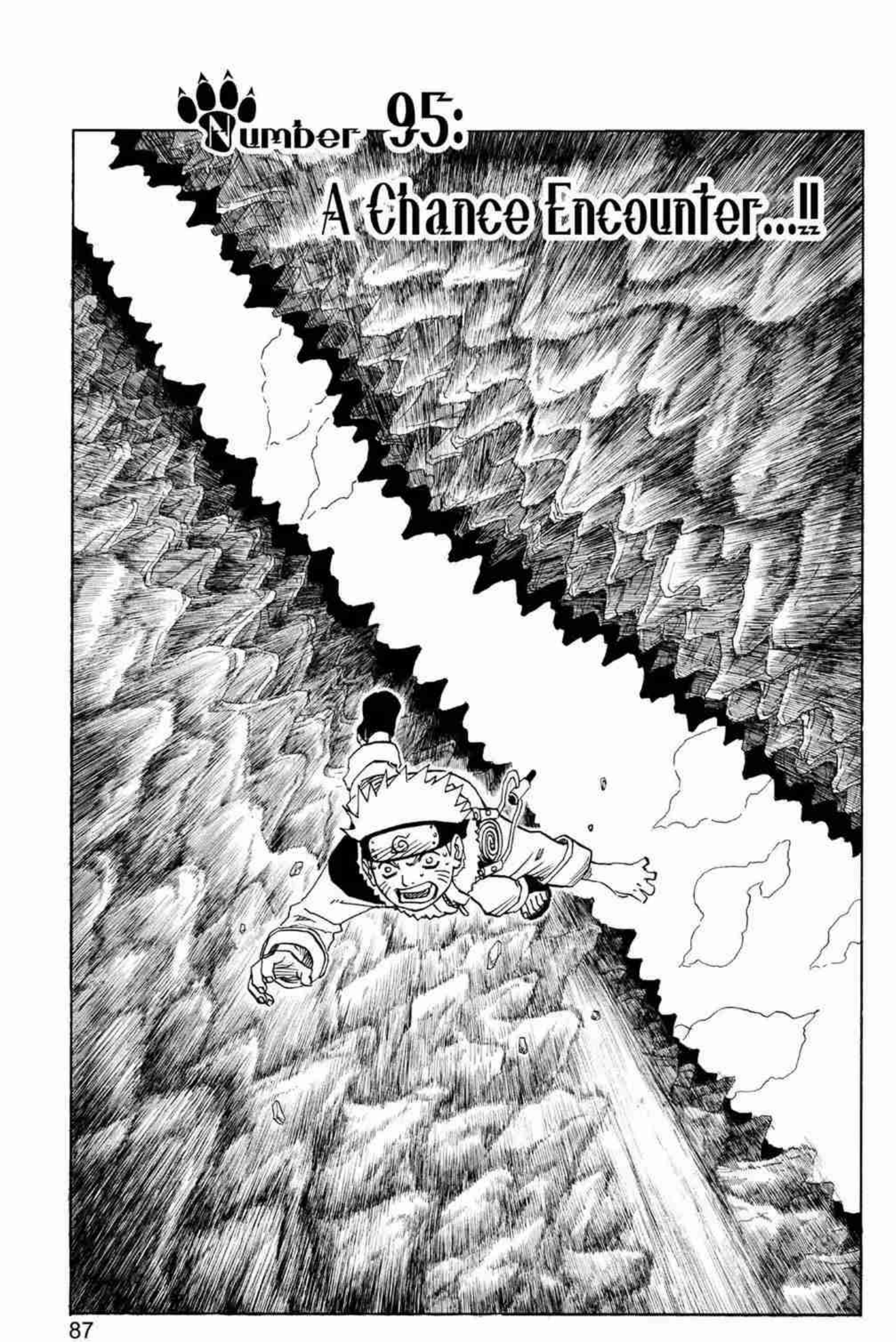
!
JAB!

WAAAH!


...IS REALLY A BLESSING OR A CURSE!
NOW... WE'LL FIND OUT SHORTLY WHETHER THE POWER THAT WAS GRANTED TO YOU...

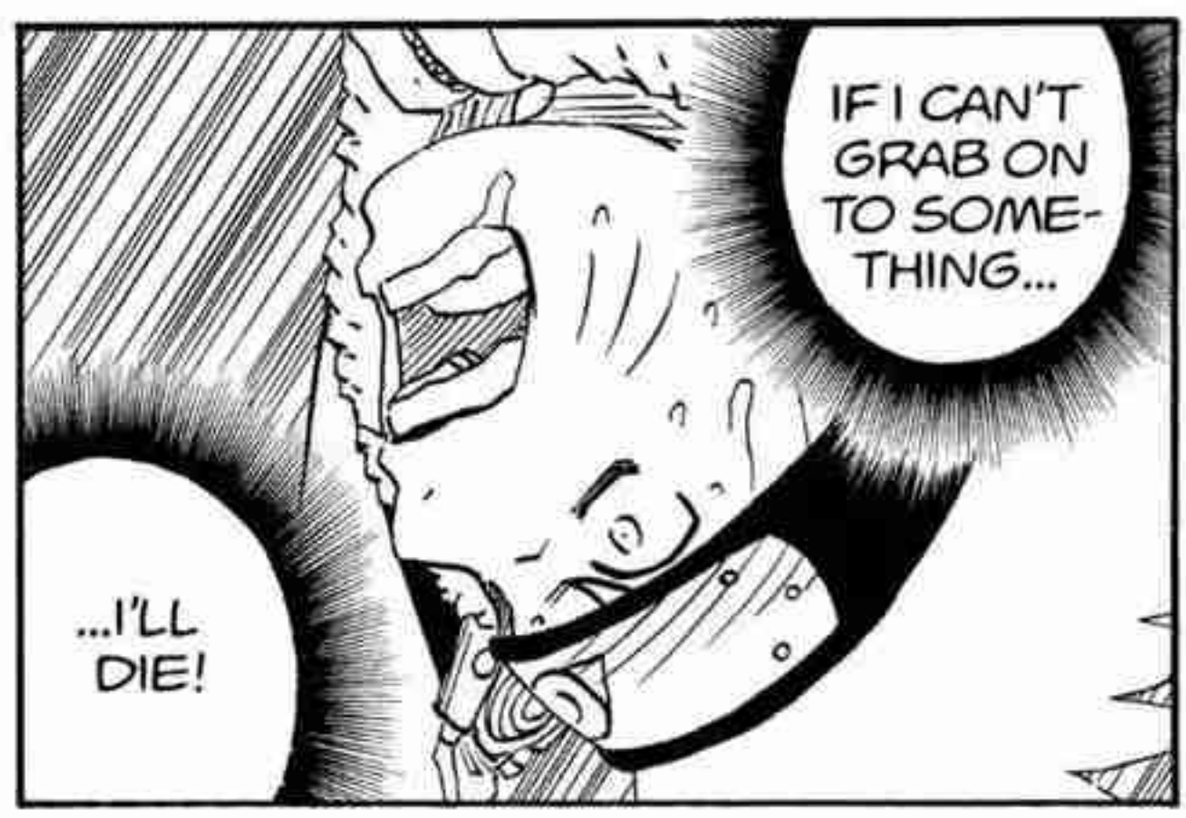
THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 14

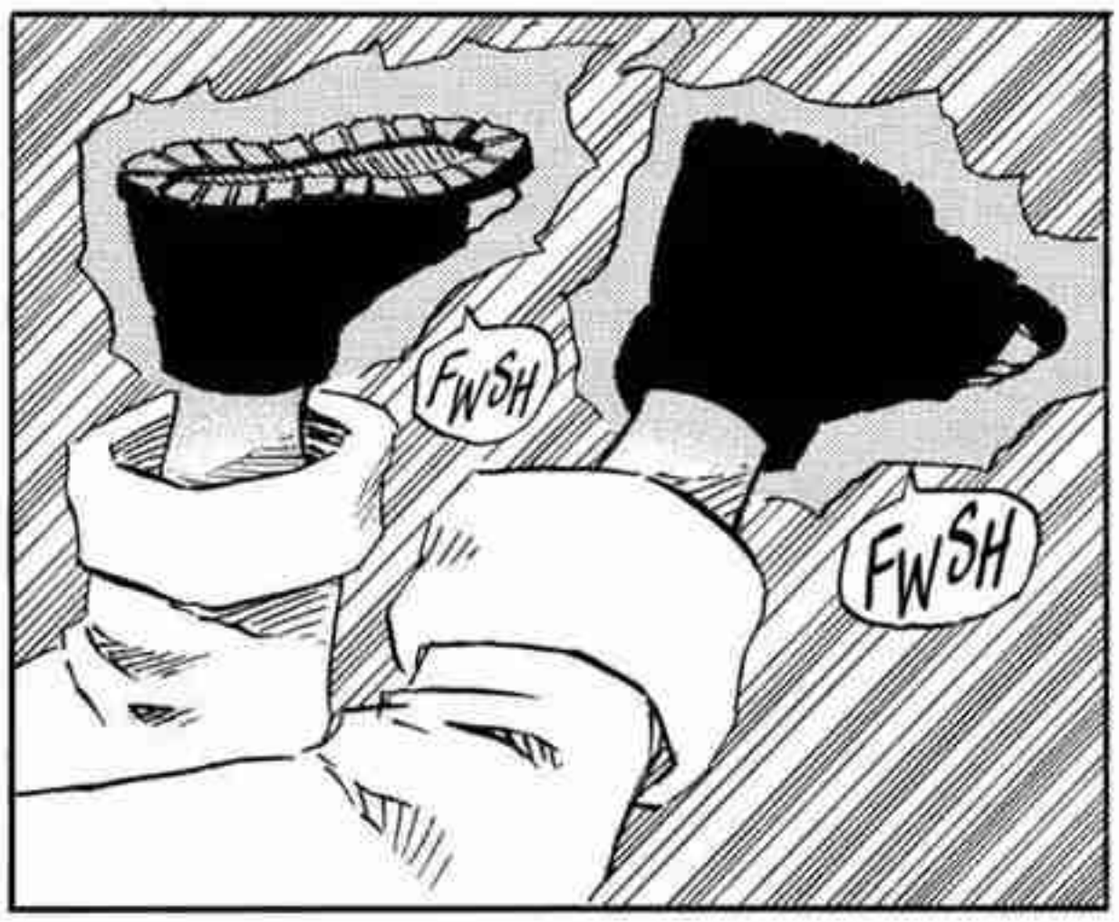
ONCE I STARTED MY LAST YEAR OF JUNIOR HIGH, I HAD TO CONCENTRATE ON STUDYING FOR MY HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS RATHER THAN DRAWING MANGA. THIS WAS BECAUSE, EVEN THOUGH I WAS VERY STUPID, I DECIDED TO APPLY TO A SCHOOL FOR HIGHLY MOTIVATED COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS. I THOUGHT I HAD STUDIED PRETTY HARD, BUT... I WAS NAIVE! I FAILED THE ENTRANCE EXAM IN SPECTACULAR FASHION. I FELT TOTALLY DEFLATED. I HAD APPLIED TO A DIFFERENT HIGH SCHOOL AS A "SAFETY," AND THEY ACCEPTED ME, SO I ENDED UP GOING THERE INSTEAD. BUT BY THAT POINT I PRETTY MUCH STOPPED STUDYING COMPLETELY BECAUSE I HAD DECIDED, "I'VE GOT TO START MAKING MY MOVE IF I'M GOING TO BECOME A MANGA ARTIST!" I KNEW ABOUT A BUNCH OF GUYS WHO HAD WON *SHONEN JUMP*'S HOP STEP AWARD IN THEIR LATE TEENS, AND I HAD HEARD RUMORS THAT PLENTY OF SHOJO MANGA ARTISTS PUBLISHED THEIR FIRST COMICS BY THE TIME THEY ENTERED HIGH SCHOOL, SO I WAS SWEATING. IN MY FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL, I BOUGHT A SET OF MANGA DRAWING TOOLS, BUT EVERY TIME I TRIED TO DRAW A "NAME" FOR A STORY (A KIND OF SIMPLE ROUGH DRAFT OF PLOTLINES AND CHARACTERS), I JUST COULDN'T DO IT. I'D JUST SIT THERE THINKING FOR FIVE HOURS (OR MORE!) AND STILL BE UNABLE TO COME UP WITH A SINGLE PAGE... I FROZE UP AS IF I'D SUDDENLY BEEN TURNED TO STONE. UNLIKE MY RANDOM DOODLING DAYS OF YORE, I NOW HAD TO COME UP WITH 31 PAGES TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD, AND THAT PROSPECT WAS JUST TOO DAUNTING. I COULDN'T EVEN PINPOINT WHAT I WAS LACKING, BUT I WAS CONTINUALLY DEPRESSED AND CONVINCED THAT I'D NEVER BECOME A MANGA ARTIST BECAUSE I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYTHING TO DRAW. THAT'S WHEN I HAD A STARTLING REALIZATION. "I'M IN BIG TROUBLE! A MANGA ARTIST NEEDS MORE THAN JUST DRAWING ABILITY... HE'S GOT TO BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH STORIES, TOO! I SHOULD HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION IN LITERATURE CLASS. DARN IT!" NOW, WHEN I LOOK BACK, I WONDER WHY ON EARTH IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO REALIZE THAT! BUT AT THE TIME, I HONESTLY BELIEVED THAT AS LONG AS I COULD DRAW, I COULD BECOME A MANGA ARTIST. AS I SAID, I REALLY WAS THOROUGHLY STUPID.

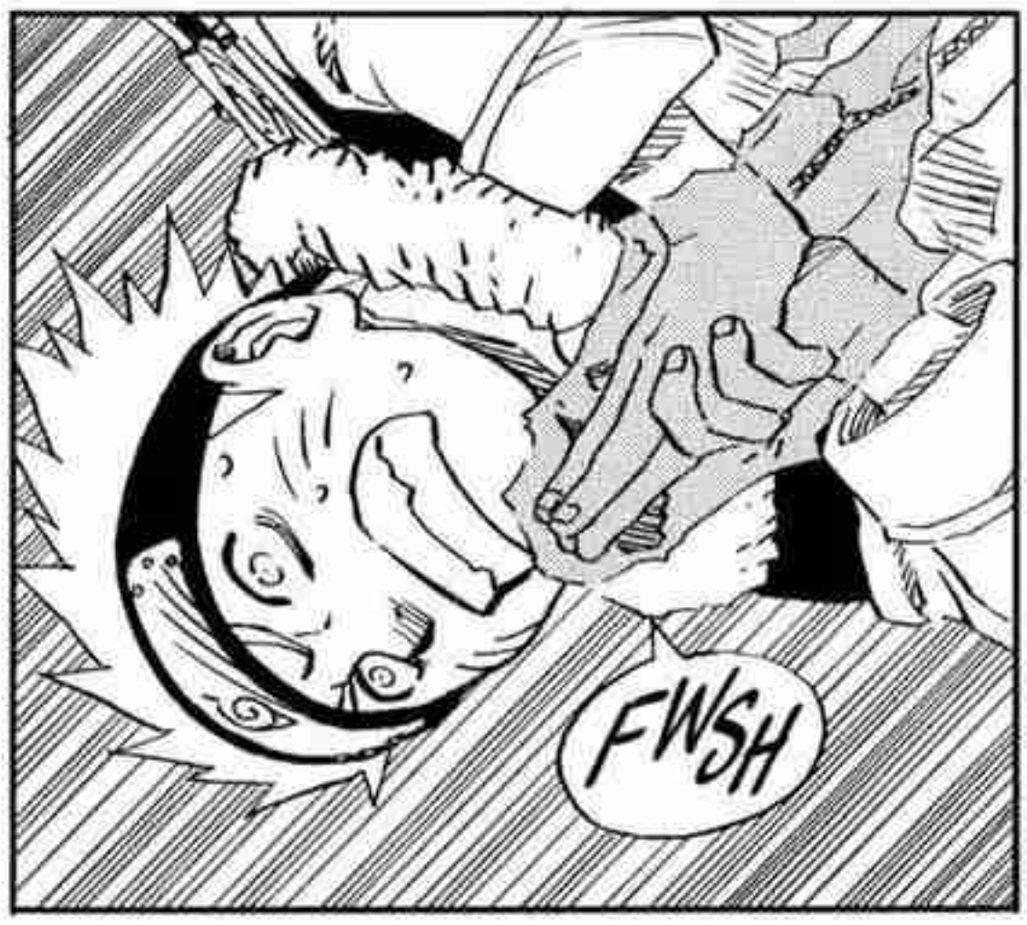

Number 95:
A Chance Encounter...!!zz

AAAAAH!
AAAAAH!

FW
UP


IF I CAN'T GRAB ON TO SOME-THING...
...I'LL DIE!


FWSH
FWSH

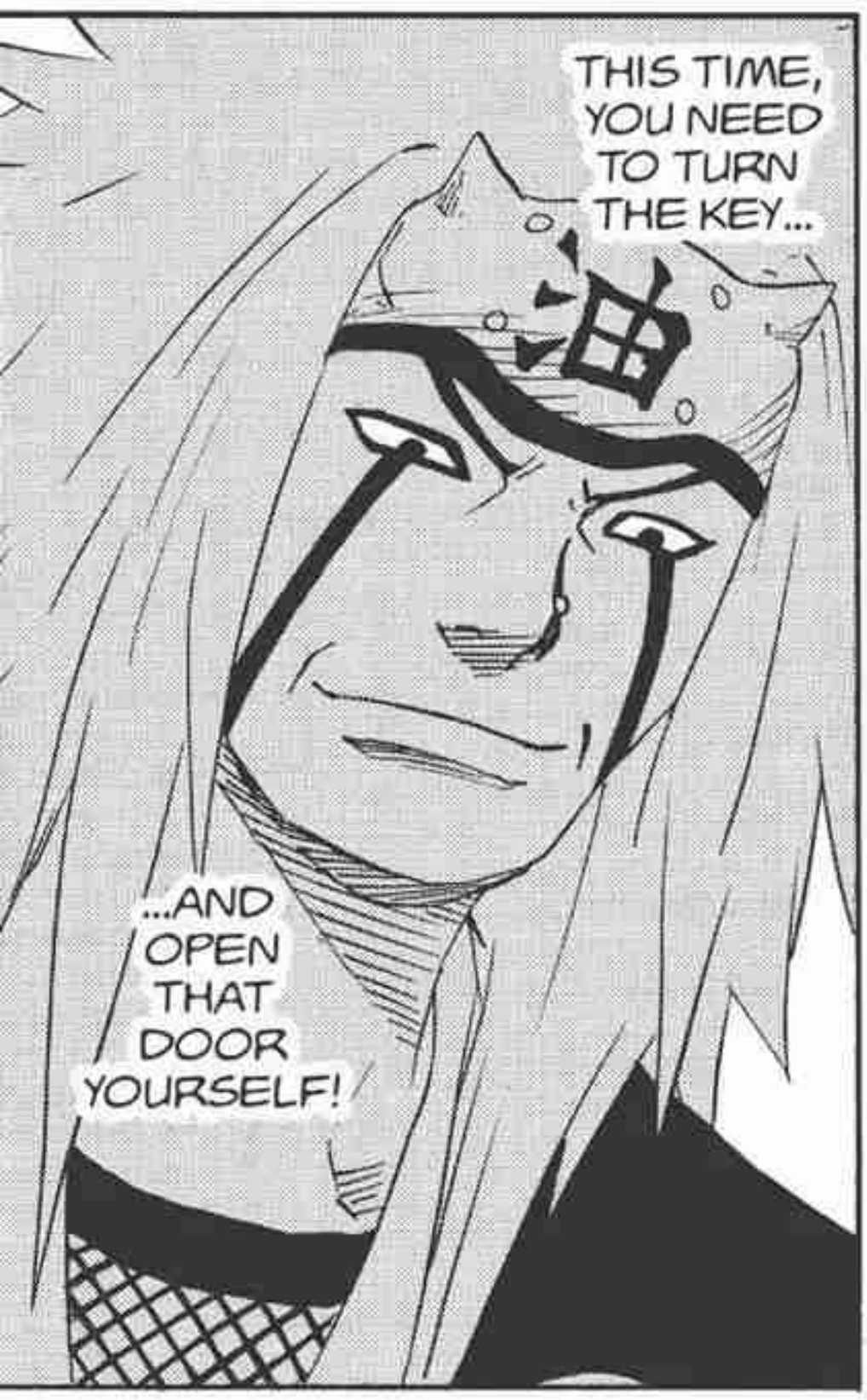

FWSH

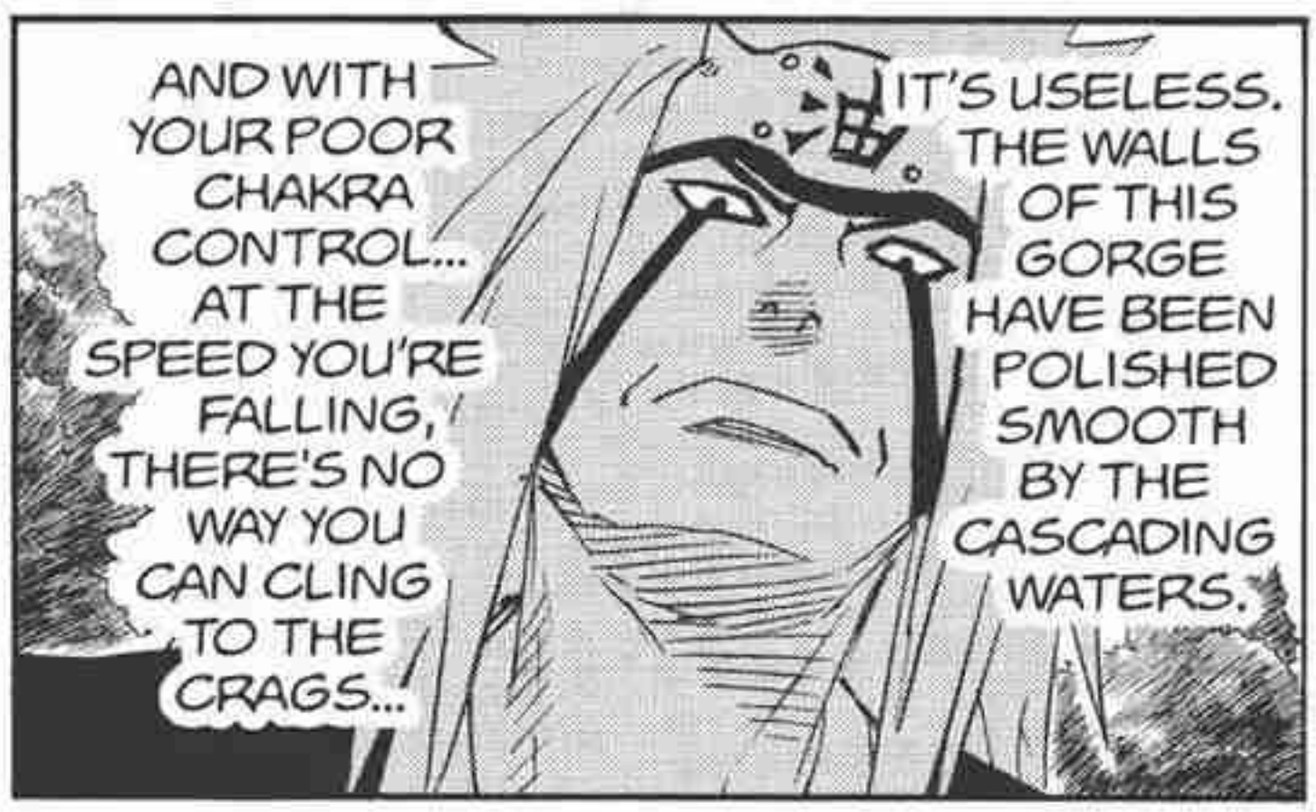
NOW!

SNATCH

!

SLIP
WAAH!


THIS TIME, YOU NEED TO TURN THE KEY...
...AND OPEN THAT DOOR YOURSELF!


AND WITH YOUR POOR CHAKRA CONTROL... AT THE SPEED YOU'RE FALLING, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN CLING TO THE CRAGS...
IT'S USELESS. THE WALLS OF THIS GORGE HAVE BEEN POLISHED SMOOTH BY THE CASCADING WATERS.

...IS TO DRAW ON THE NINE-TAILED FOX'S CHAKRA.
NARUTO... YOUR ONLY HOPE NOW...

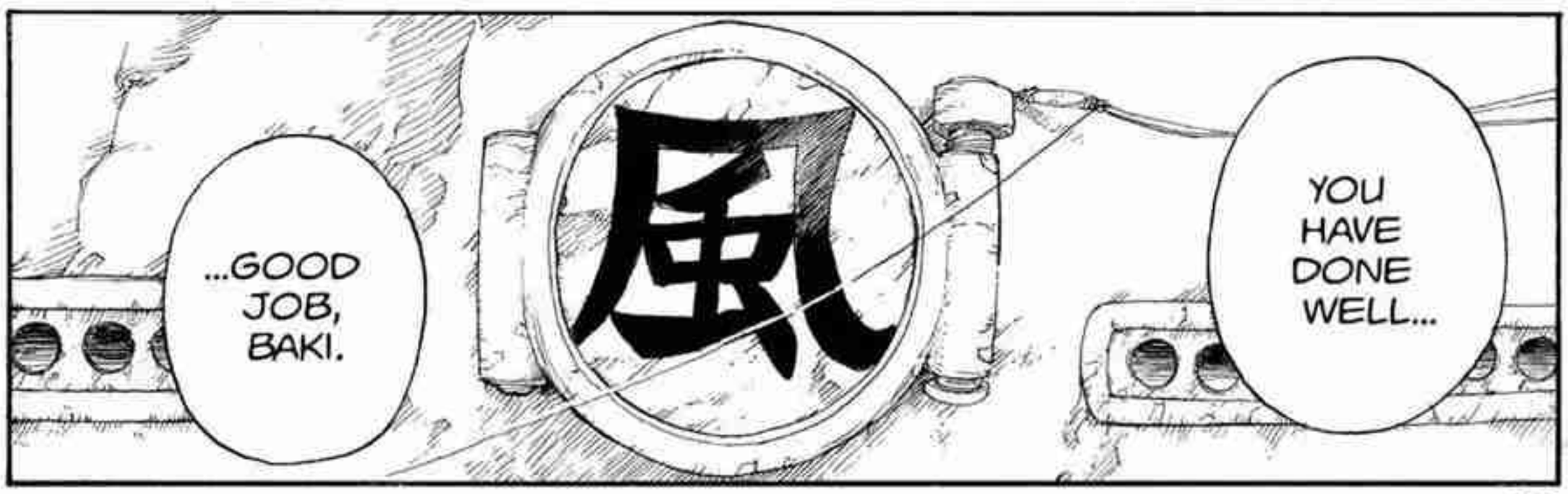
I'M REALLY GONNA DIE...!!
AT THIS RATE...

THROB
DIE...

GONNA DIE...

HALF A DAY EARLIER, IN THE LAND OF WIND...

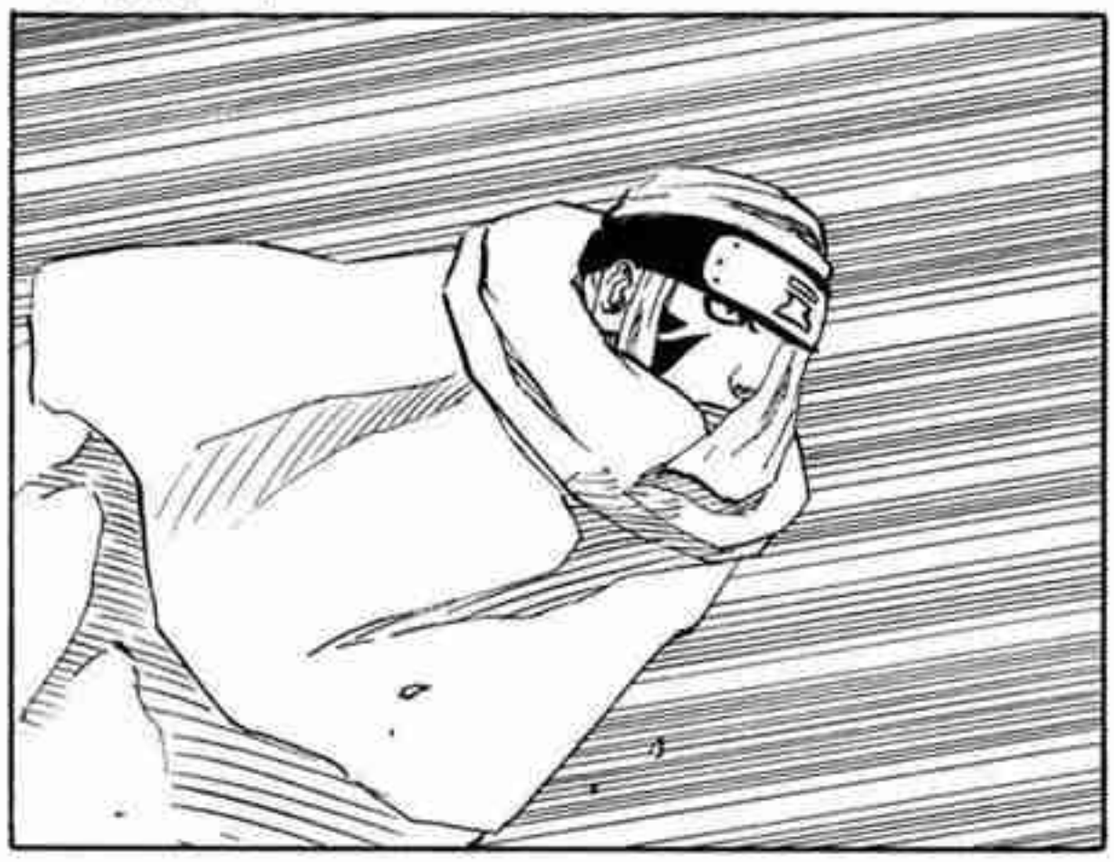
...IN THE VILLAGE OF SUNA-GAKURE ...

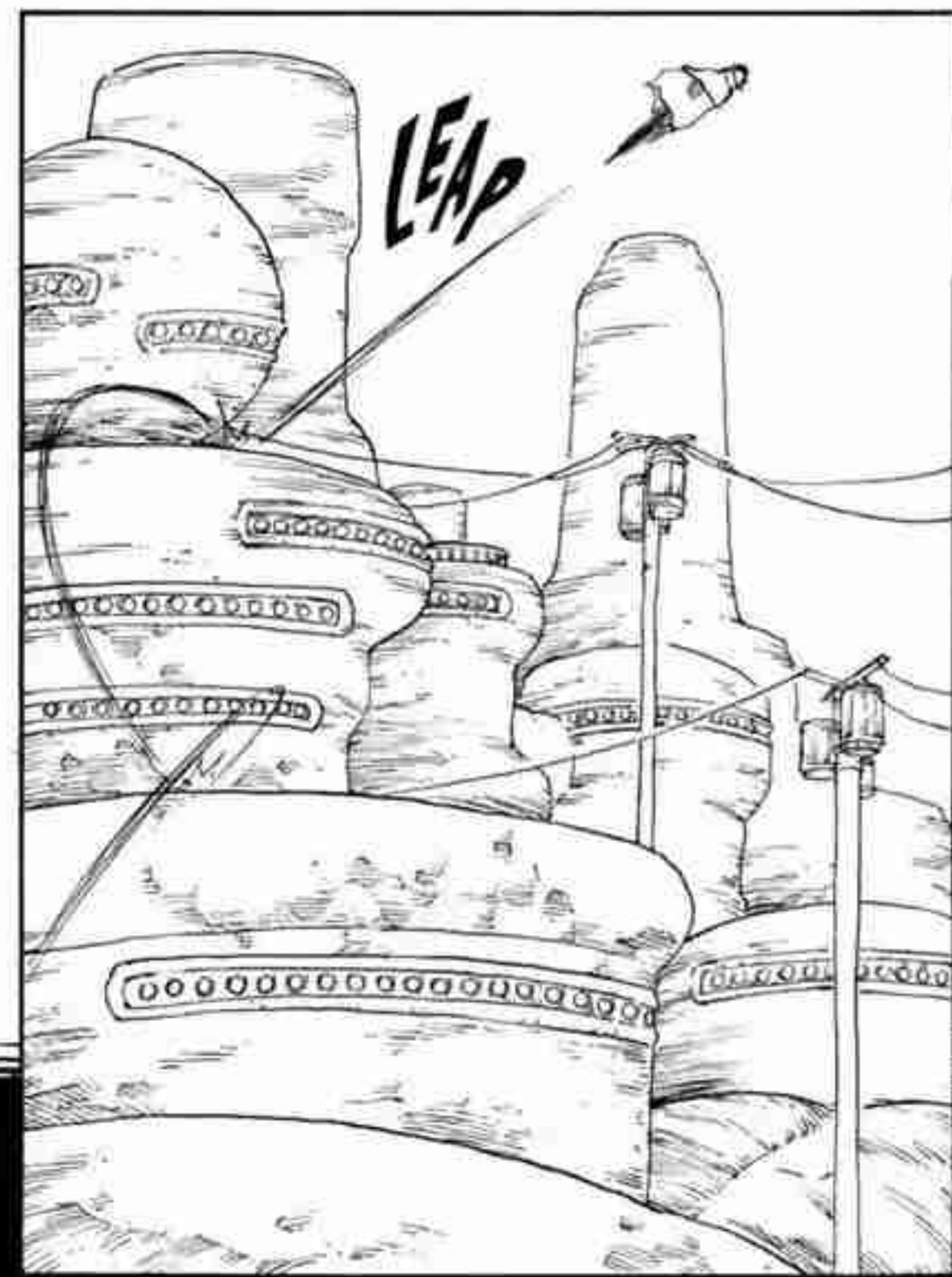


...AS WE INTENDED... TO THE FINAL ROUNDS.

ALL THREE HAVE SAFELY ADVANCED...

*LAND OF FIRE: THE NATION WHERE THE VILLAGE OF KONOHAGAKURE IS LOCATED.




LEAP

ALL IS AS LORD KAZEKAGE WILLS IT.

THIS IS AN A+ RANKED MISSION... REMEMBER THAT.
WE SAND SHALL JOIN WITH SOUND...
...AND THIS WILL PROBABLY END IN WAR AGAINST KONOHA.

...AND NOW WE'RE BREAKING IT.
SO MANY WILL DIE AGAIN...
A WAR? WHY? WHY NOW?!
WE'VE SPENT SO MUCH TIME AND SACRIFICED SO MUCH TO ARRIVE AT THIS TREATY OF ALLIANCE...

THE TREATY OF ALLIANCE ITSELF IS A THREAT TO OUR VERY EXISTENCE.

SHINOBI ARE FUNDAMENTALLY INSTRUMENTS OF CONFLICT.

...TO FORCE MILITARY CUTBACKS ON OUR VILLAGE OF SUNAGAKURE.

...THAT IDIOT DAIMYO OF THE LAND OF WIND USED THE TREATY AS HIS OPPORTUNITY...

YOU GENIN MAY NOT KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT...

WHEN THE HEAD IS A FOOL, IT IS WE, THE HANDS AND FEET, WHO SUFFER.

...OUR VILLAGE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RAISE THE QUALITY OF EACH SHINOBI.

IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ITS MILITARY STRENGTH...

THE ALLIANCE CAUSED THE WIND DAIMYO TO PUT HIS TRUST IN KONOHA AND FORWARD REQUESTS TO THEM THAT HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SENDING TO US...

...FURTHER SLASHING THE FLOW OF FUNDS TO HIS OWN NATION'S SHINOBI VILLAGE...

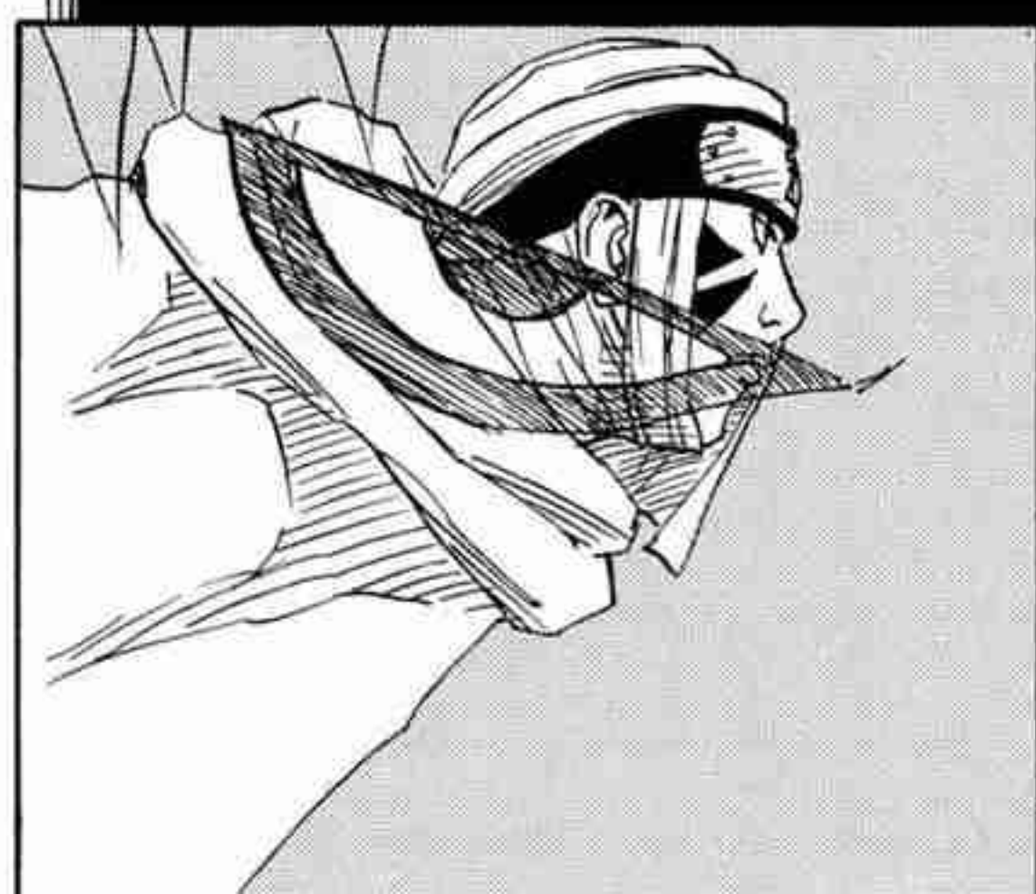
... CLAIMING THAT HIS SCHEME WAS CHEAPER.

READ THIS WAY
...
RIGHT NOW, THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE LAND OF WIND IS IN PERIL.
...GAARA.
THAT IS WHY SHINOBI LIKE YOU WERE "MANUFACTURED"...
...DECIDED TO JOIN FORCES WITH OTOGAKURE TO SHOW OUR IDIOT DAIMYO THE NAIVETÉ OF HIS POLICIES...
LORD KAZEKAGE, WHO SENSED THE IMPENDING CRISIS OF SUNAGAKURE'S MILITARY DECLINE...
...ALL THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF SAND WILL BE UTTERLY DRAINED, AND OUR CAPABILITY TO FIGHT KONOHA TOTALLY LOST.
IF WE WAIT ANY LONGER...
...AND, AT THE SAME TIME, TO CRUSH KONOHA AND RESTORE THE SAND VILLAGE TO PROSPERITY.

GAARA, THIS MISSION... ITS SUCCESS DEPENDS HEAVILY ON YOU...

...

I KNOW.



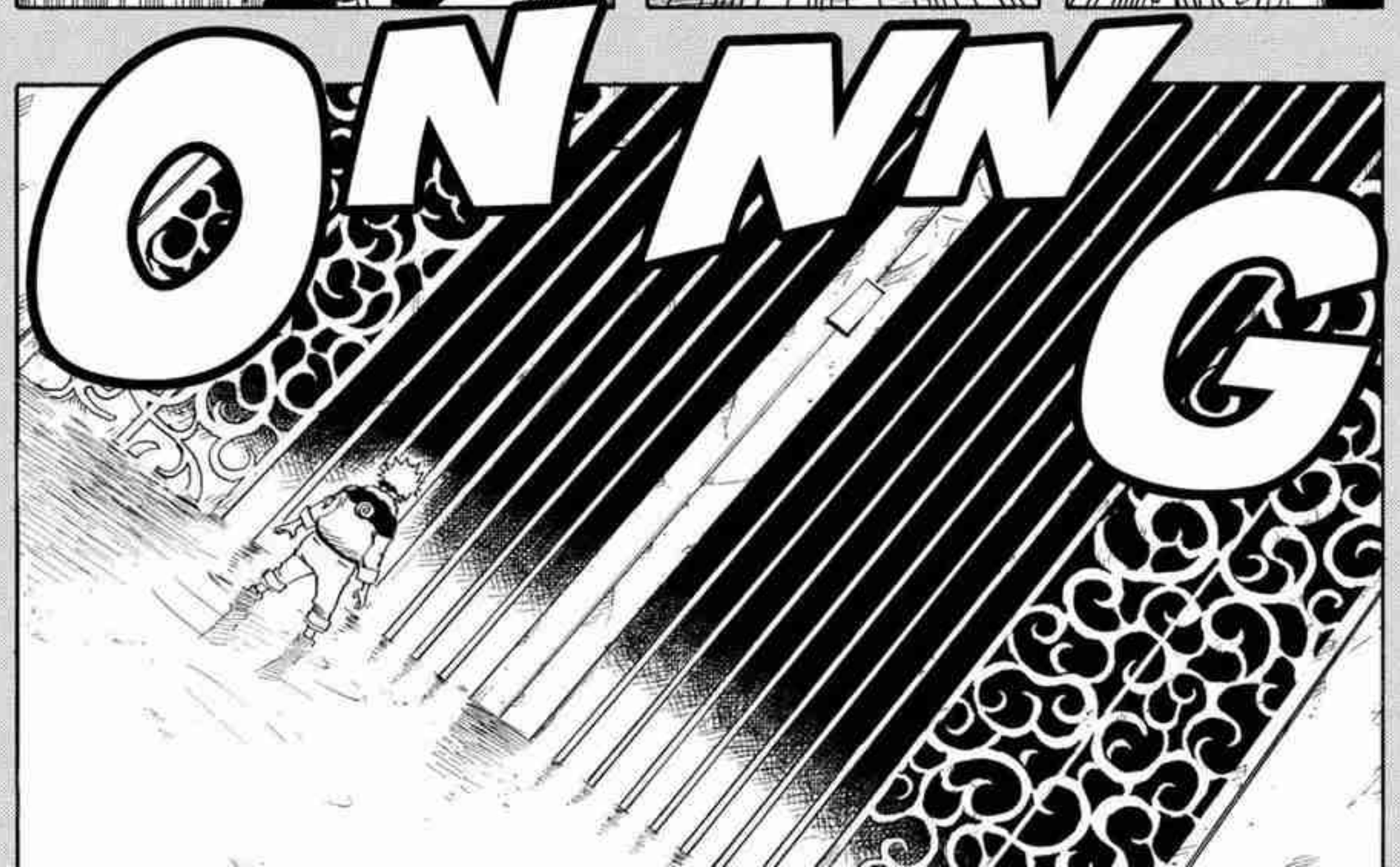
HUH?!

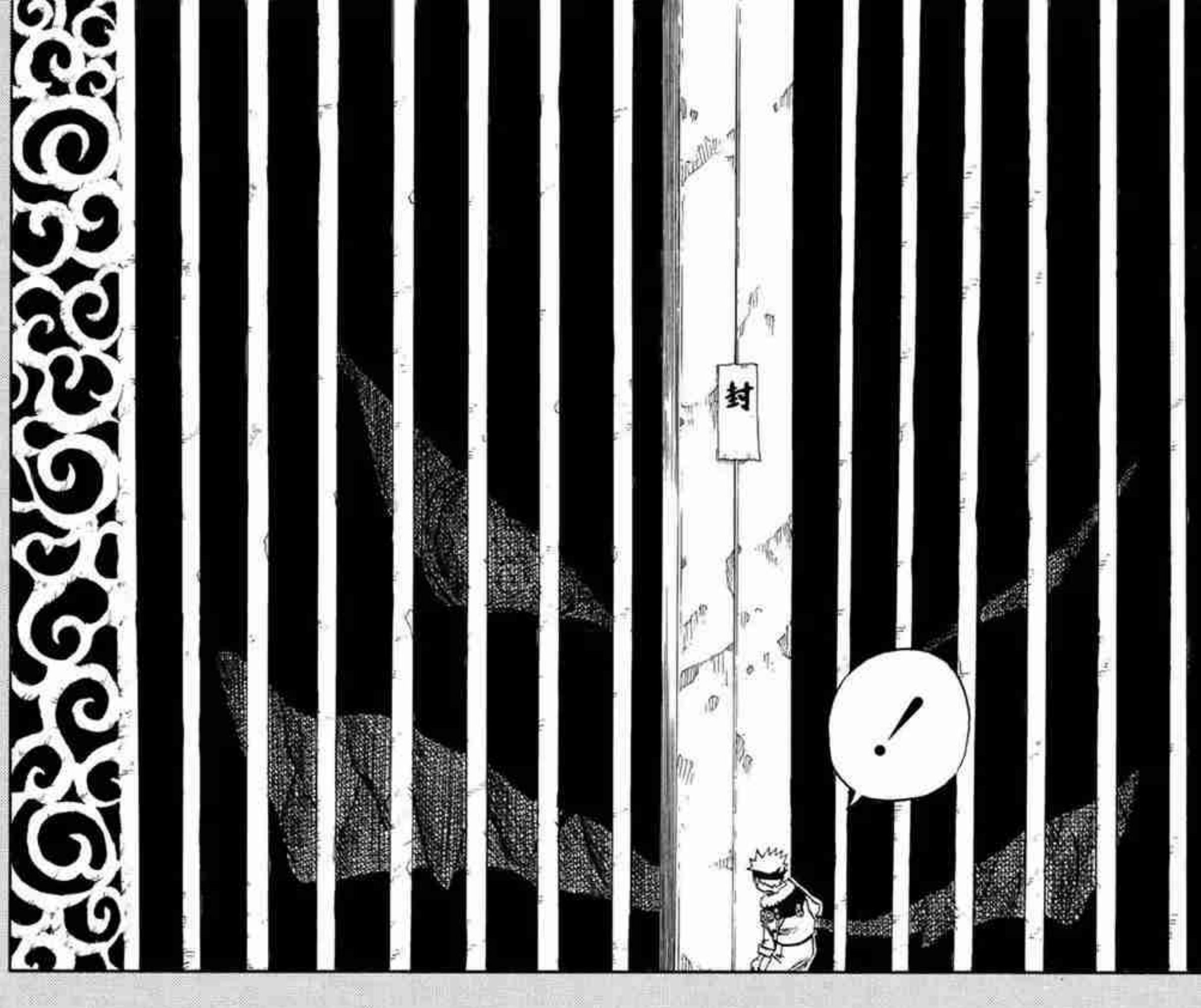
!

IT'S THAT CHAKRA...
SPLASH
THIS FEELING...

SHUDDER
!!

!


OMG


封
!

I-IT'S HUGE...! WHAT IS IT?!
UGH!

!!

?
QUIVER
CREEP
SPLASH

KID, COME HERE...
...CLOSER.

WAAAH!

CLANG

...THE NINE-TAILED FOX...!

...Y... YOU'RE...
...

I WANT TO DEVOUR YOU, BUT THIS GATE... IT'S SEALED SOMEHOW...
IT WON'T OPEN... HOW VEXING...

WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?

...IT WAS HIS CHAKRA.
NOW I GET IT... THE RED CHAKRA...

WHY DON'T YOU PAY ME SOME RENT AND LEND ME YOUR CHAKRA?!

HEY, STUPID FOX! I'VE BEEN LETTING YOU LIVE IN MY BODY ALL THIS TIME, SO...

GLARE

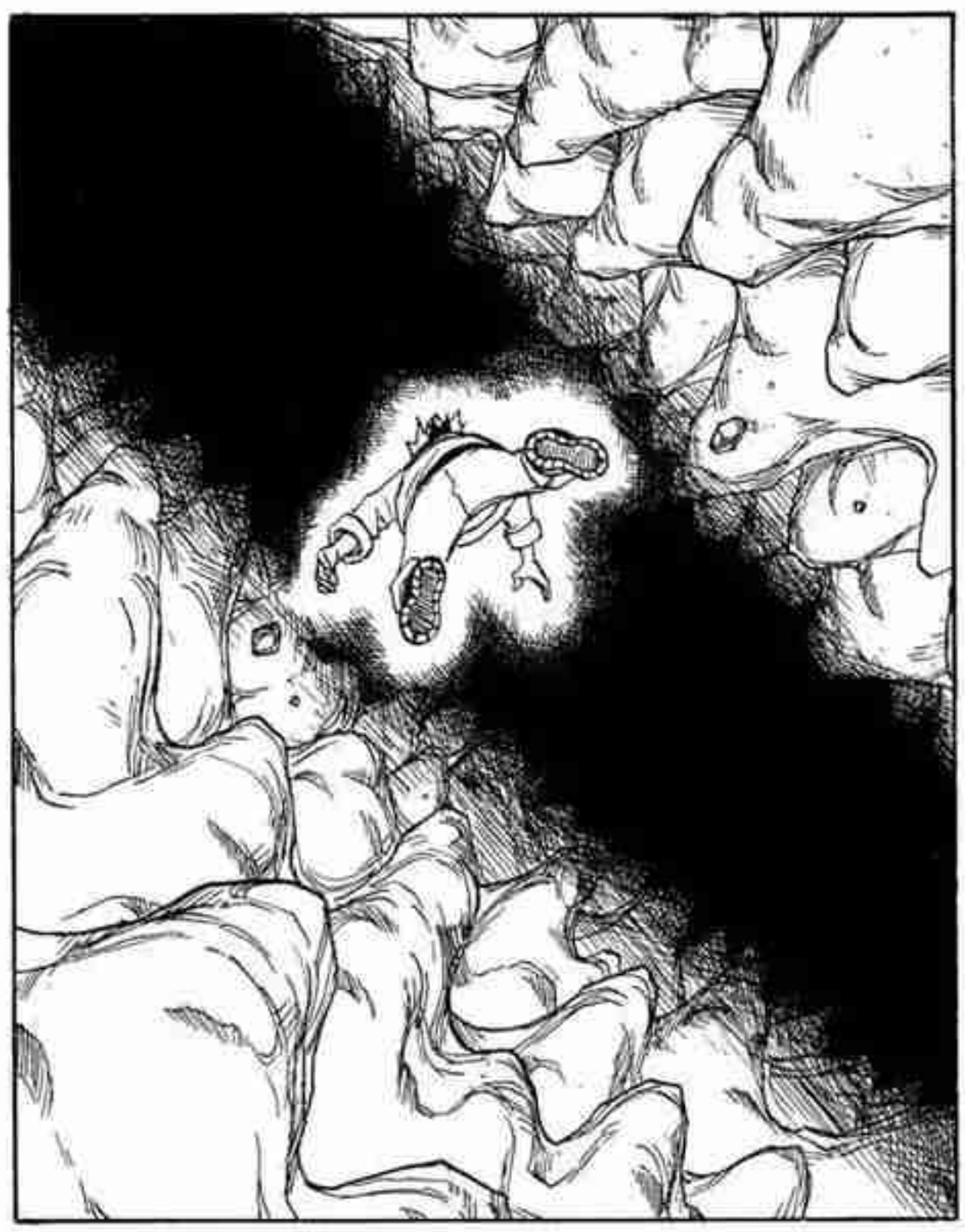
!

UH?

...

SNAP
!

VERY WELL... I'LL REWARD YOUR COURAGE... HERE YOU GO!
SWIRL
WAAH !!

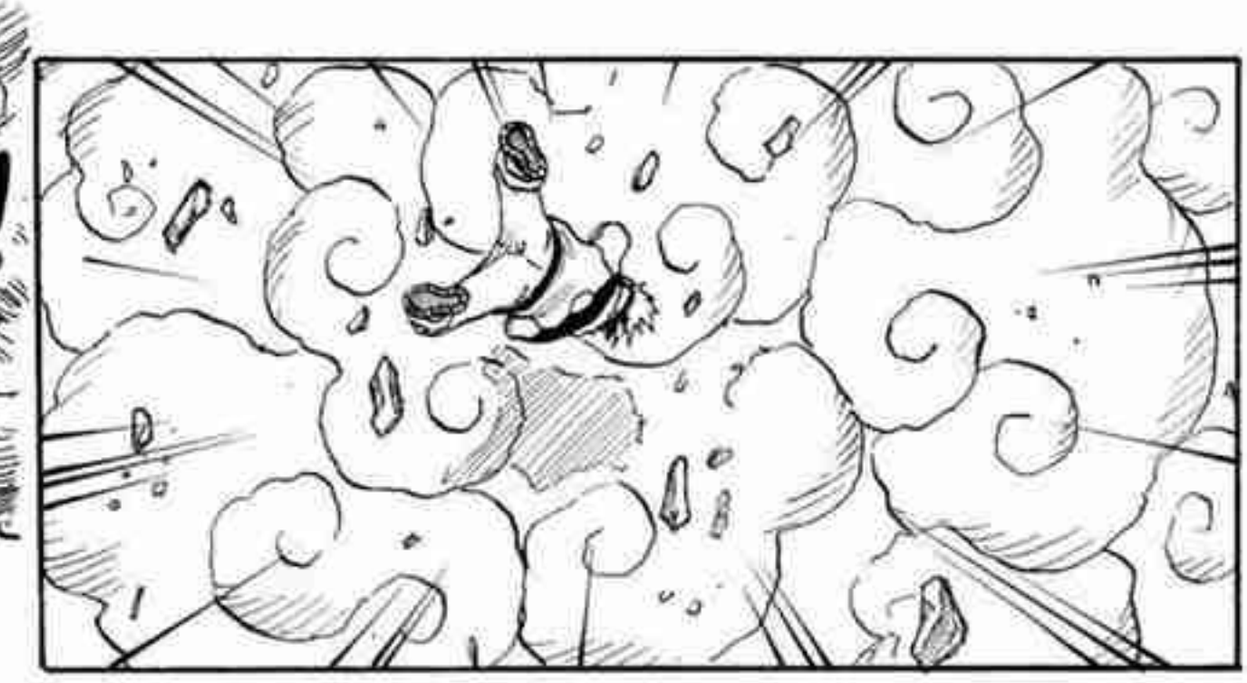


SPURT

FWUP
FWUP
FWUP

THIS IS IT... THAT FEELING!
CRUNCH

KUCHIYOSE NO JUTSU! THE ART OF SUMMONING!



FWOOSH

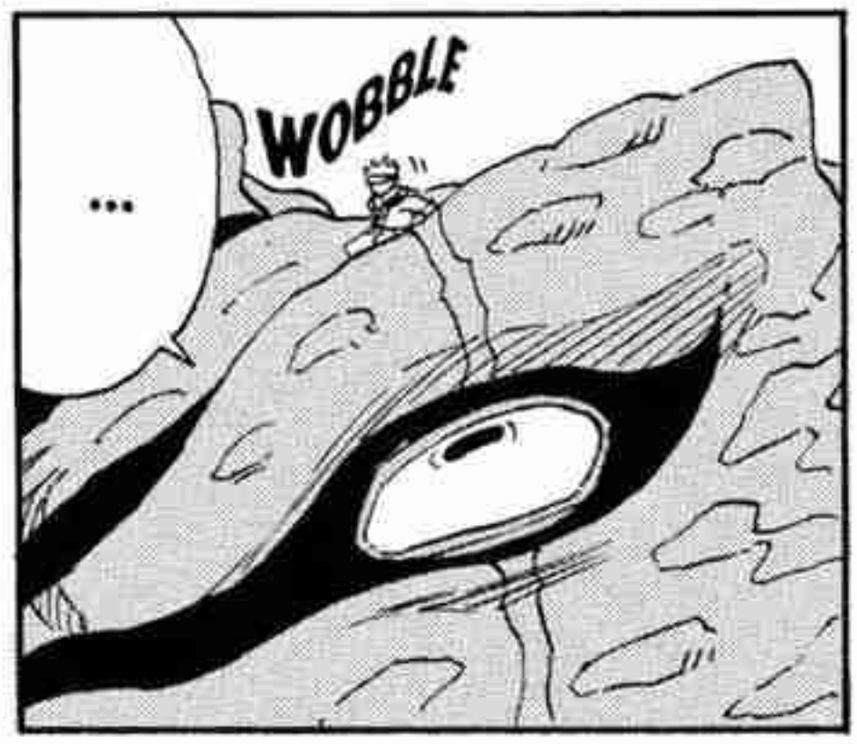
WHOA!!
BOUNCE
CLATTER
CLATTER
CRASH

Number 96: The Unexpected Visitor!!

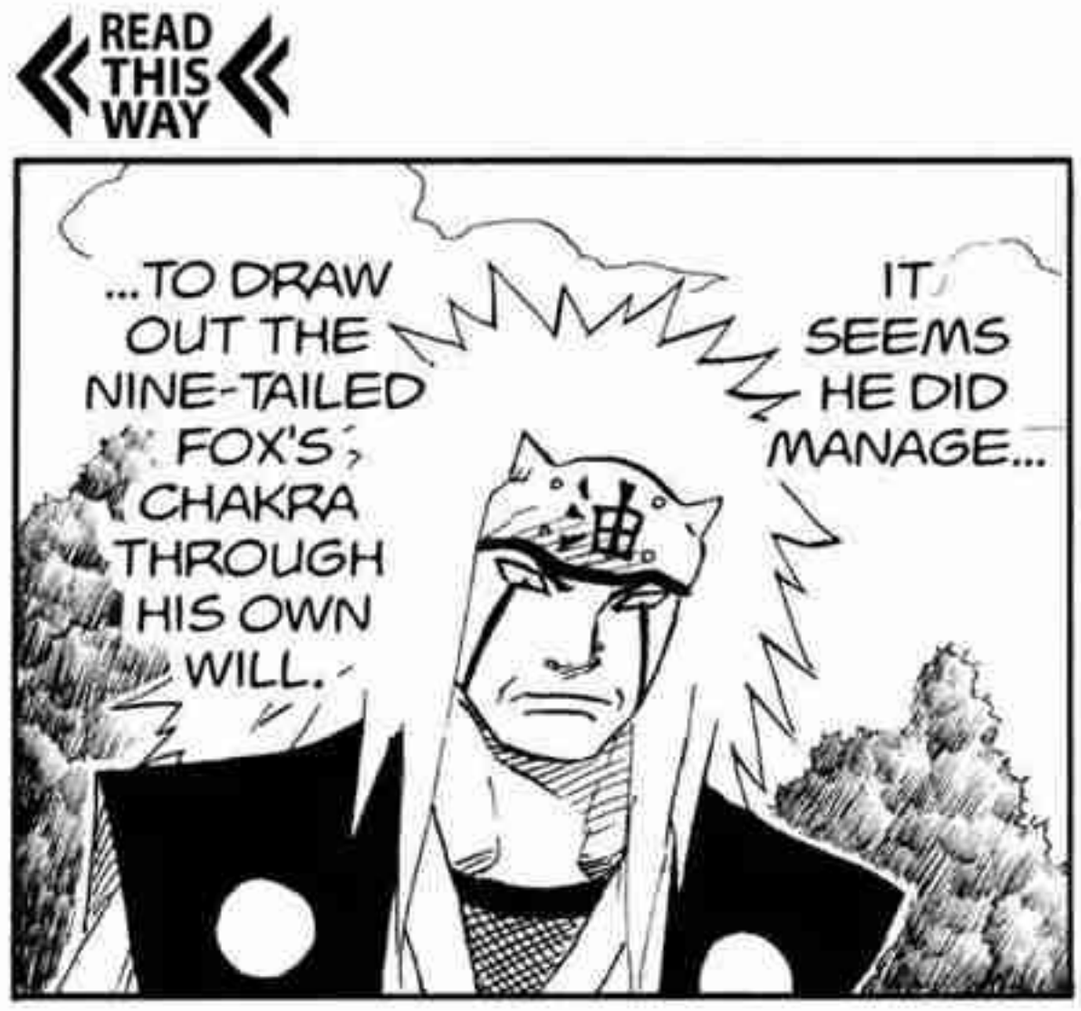
CLAMBER
OOF, OOF...

...HUGE!
IT'S...

TREMBLE

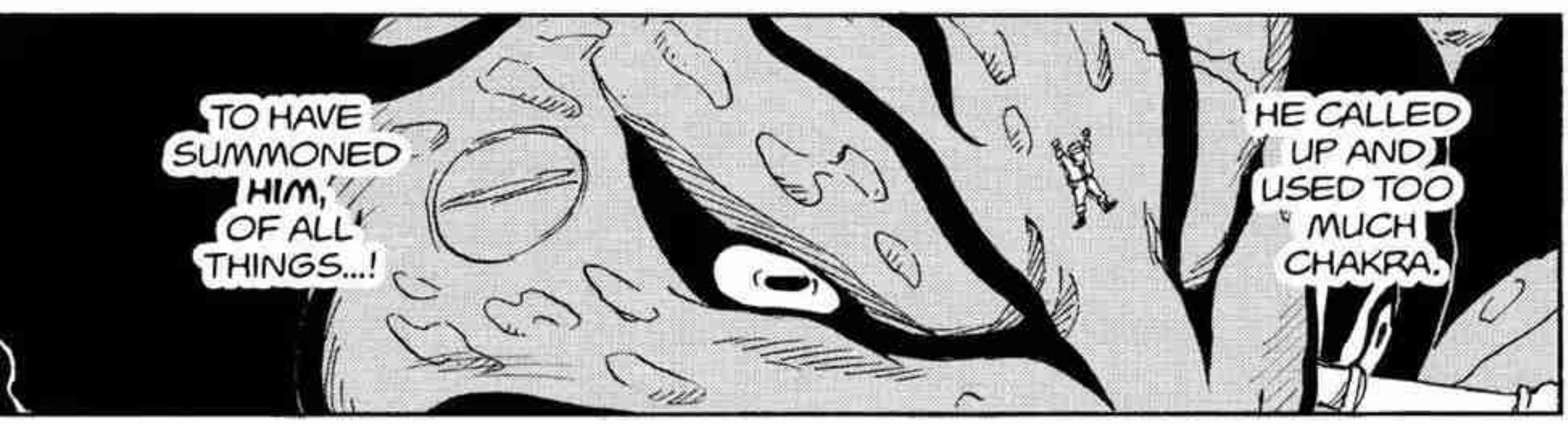

...
WOBBLE

NO TAIL!


READ THIS WAY
...TO DRAW OUT THE NINE-TAILED FOX'S CHAKRA THROUGH HIS OWN WILL.
IT SEEMS HE DID MANAGE...

YES! I DID IT!! I MASTERED THE ART OF SUMMONING!

STRETCH
...HIS CONTROL OF IT IS STILL FAR FROM STABLE.
...ALTHOUGH...


TO HAVE SUMMONED HIM, OF ALL THINGS...!
HE CALLED UP AND USED TOO MUCH CHAKRA.

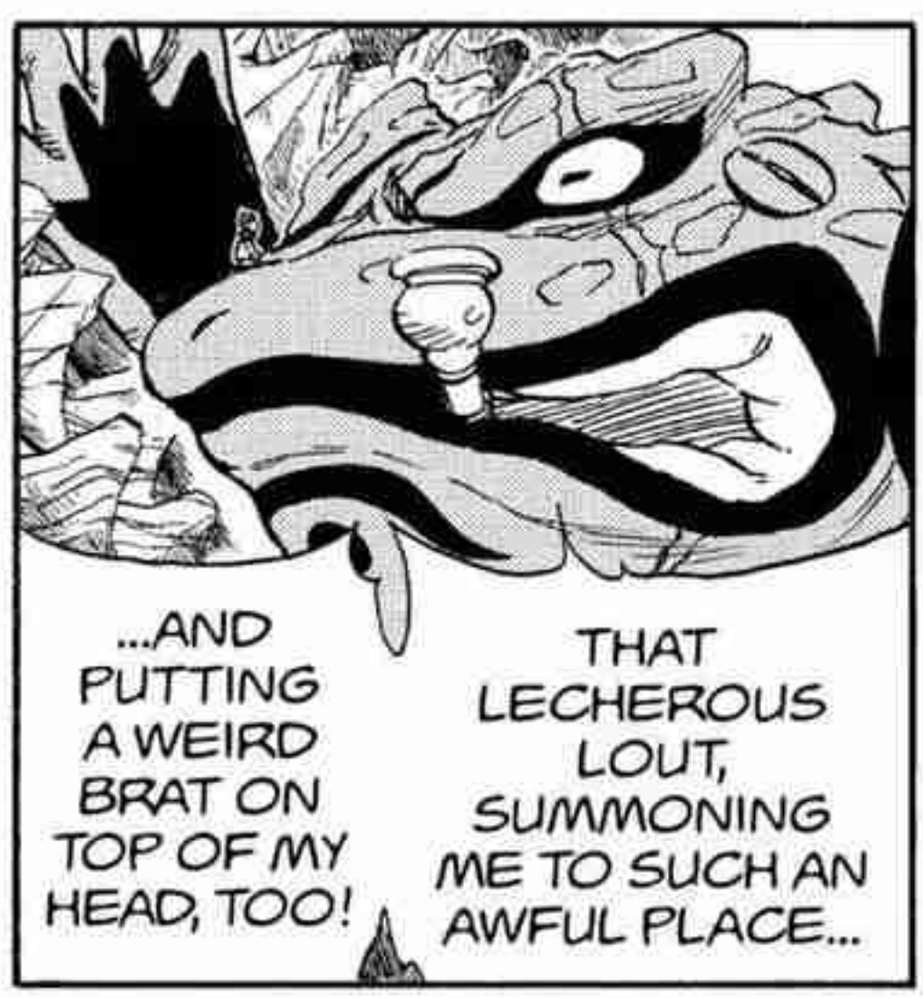
WHEE!

...EVEN I CAN'T HANDLE HIM!
I MEAN, GAMA BUNTA...?

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AROUND SCREAMING ON TOP OF MY HEAD, IDIOT?!

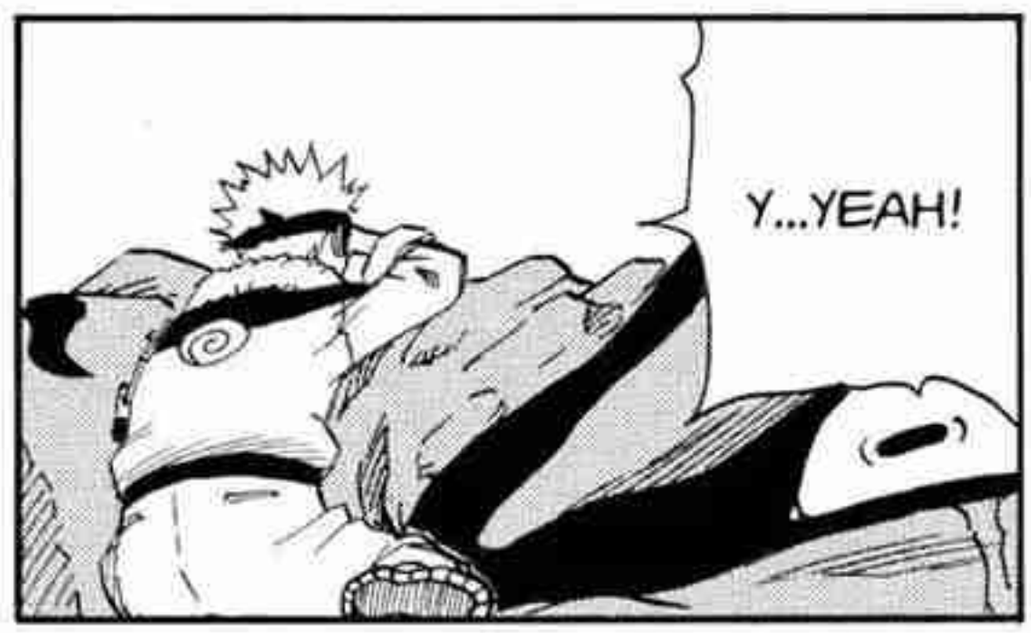
!

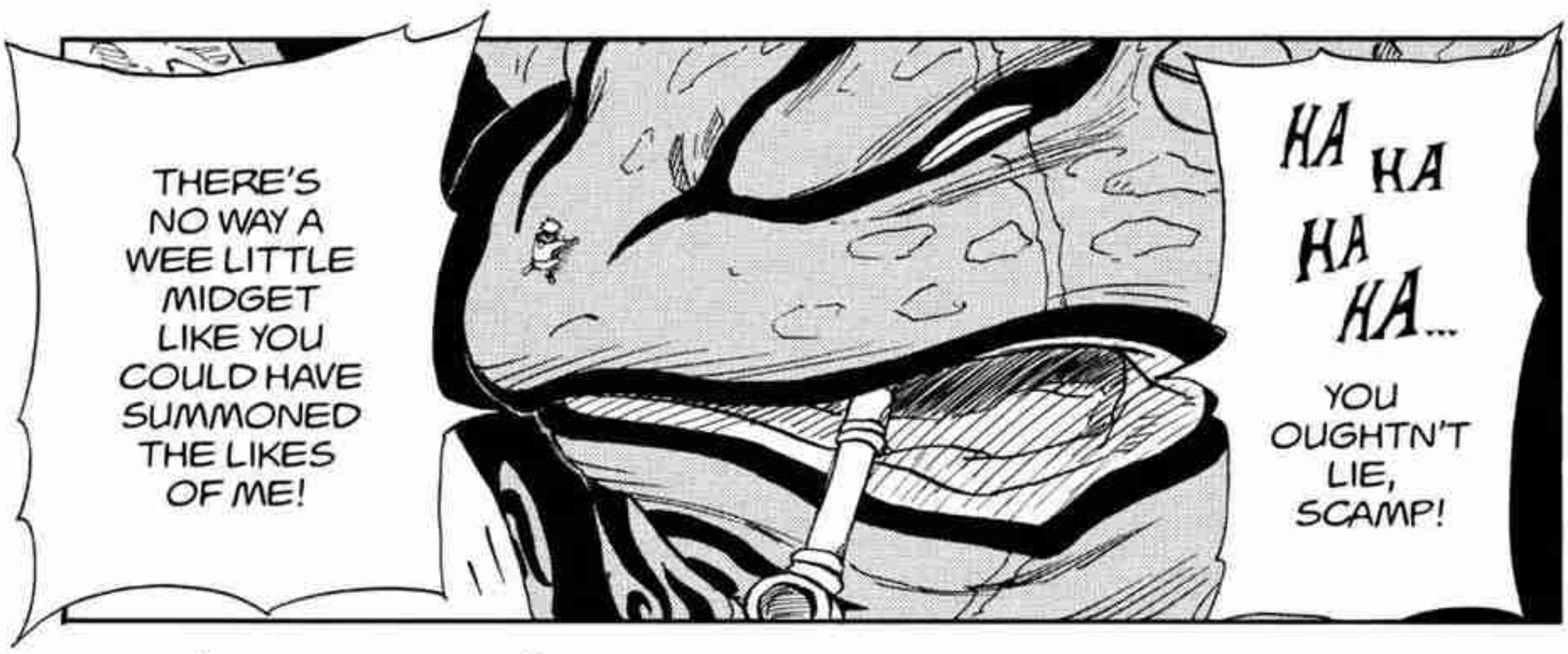
HEY, URCHIN!



...YOU?
...!

I NEEDED SOMEONE TO UH... RESCUE ME...
...I'M THE ONE WHO SUMMONED YOU.
ACTU-ALLY ...

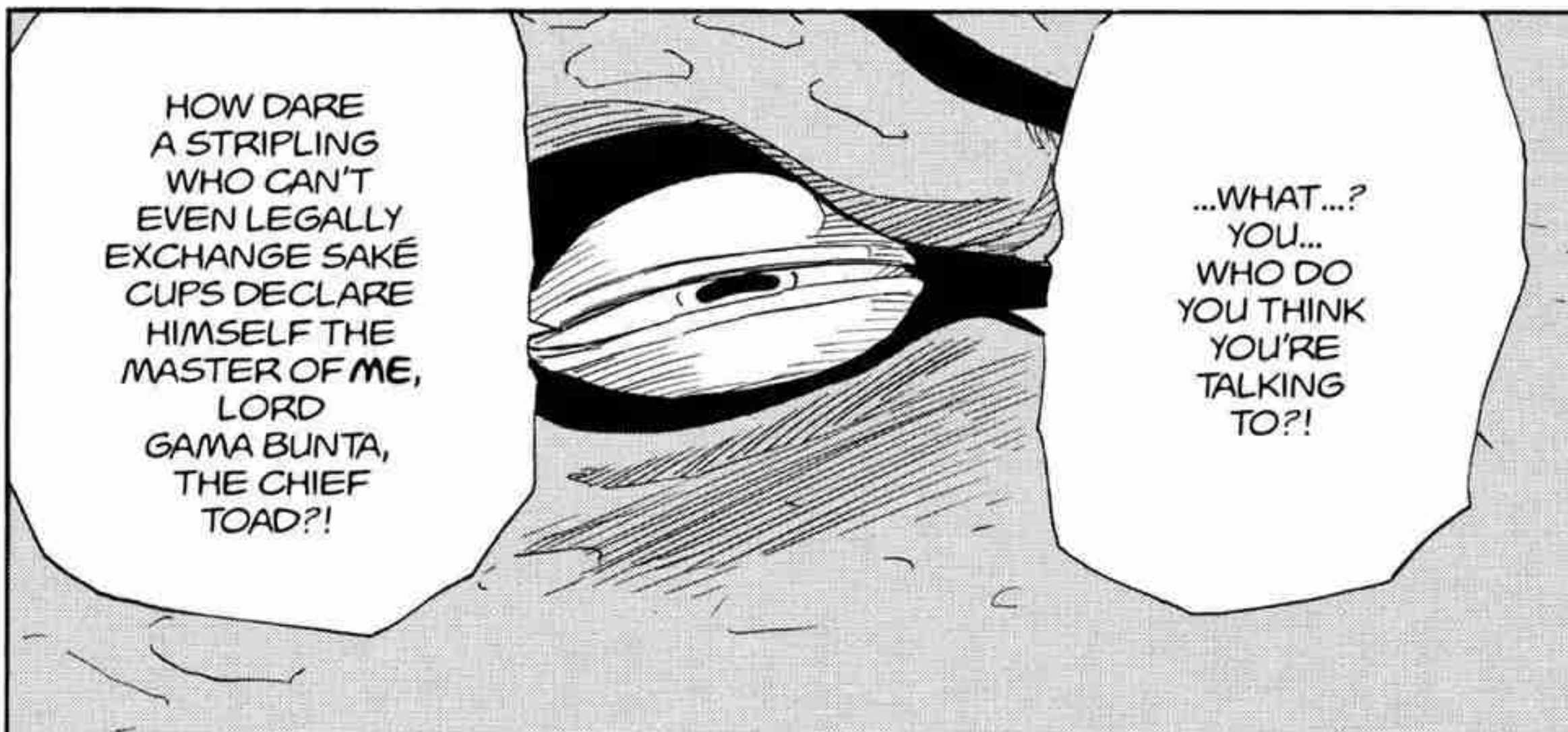

Y...YEAH!


THERE'S NO WAY A WEE LITTLE MIDGET LIKE YOU COULD HAVE SUMMONED THE LIKES OF ME!
HA HA HA HA...
YOU OUGHTN'T LIE, SCAMP!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA! HA HA HA!
GLARE

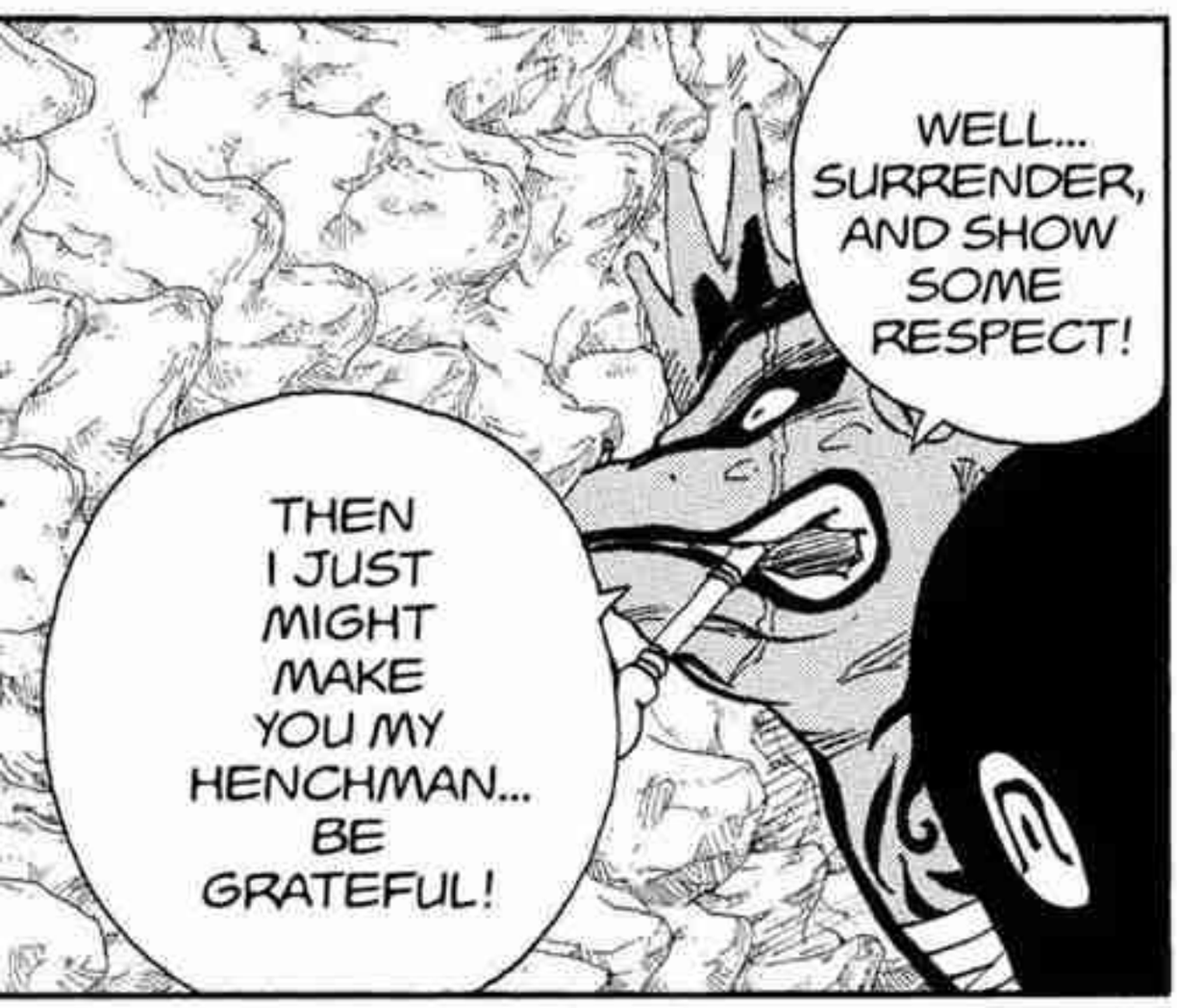
RAGE RAGE

YOU STUPID FROG! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO ACT HUMBLE, AND YOU KEEP BLABBERING AND INSULTING ME!

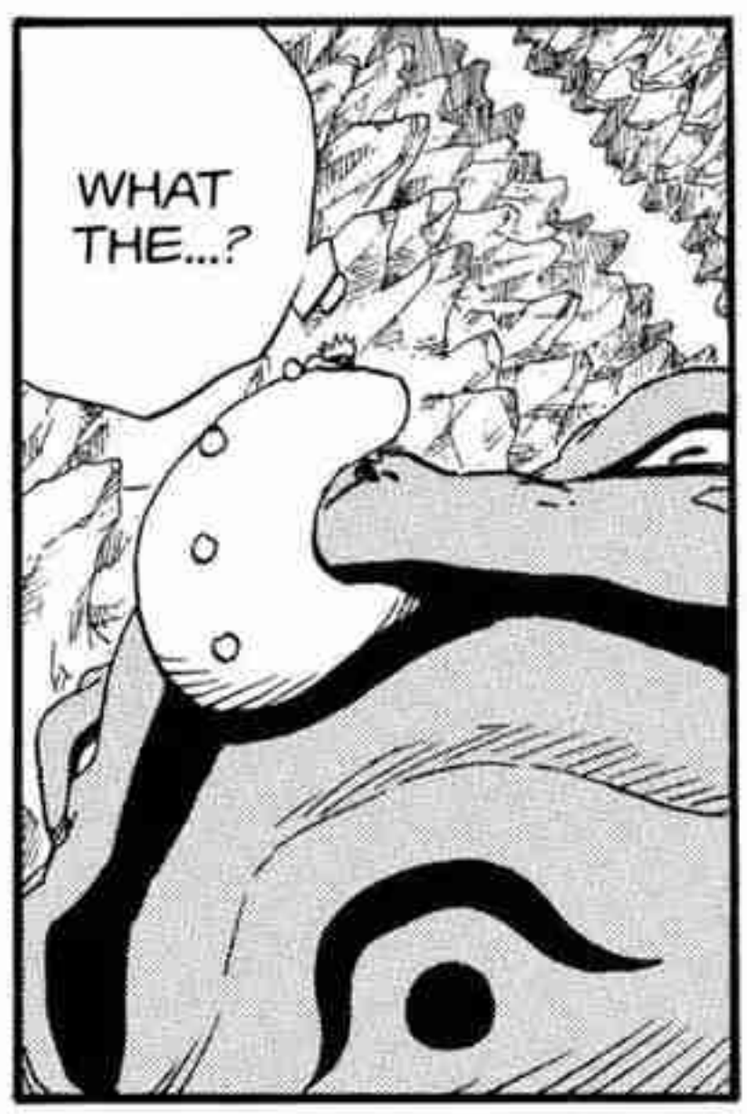


WAAH!

DO YOU WANT ME TO KILL YOU?!



GRIP
CLATTER

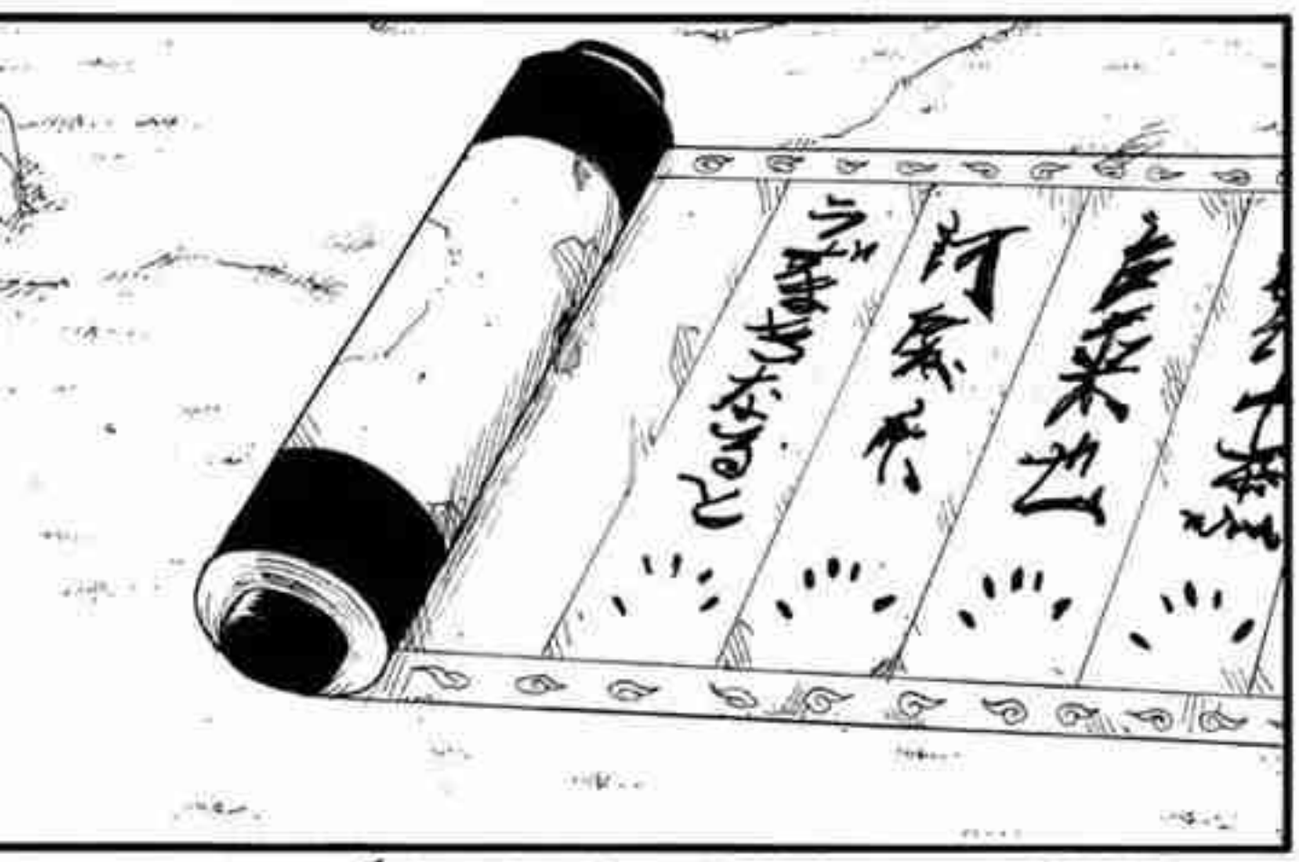

WHAT THE...?

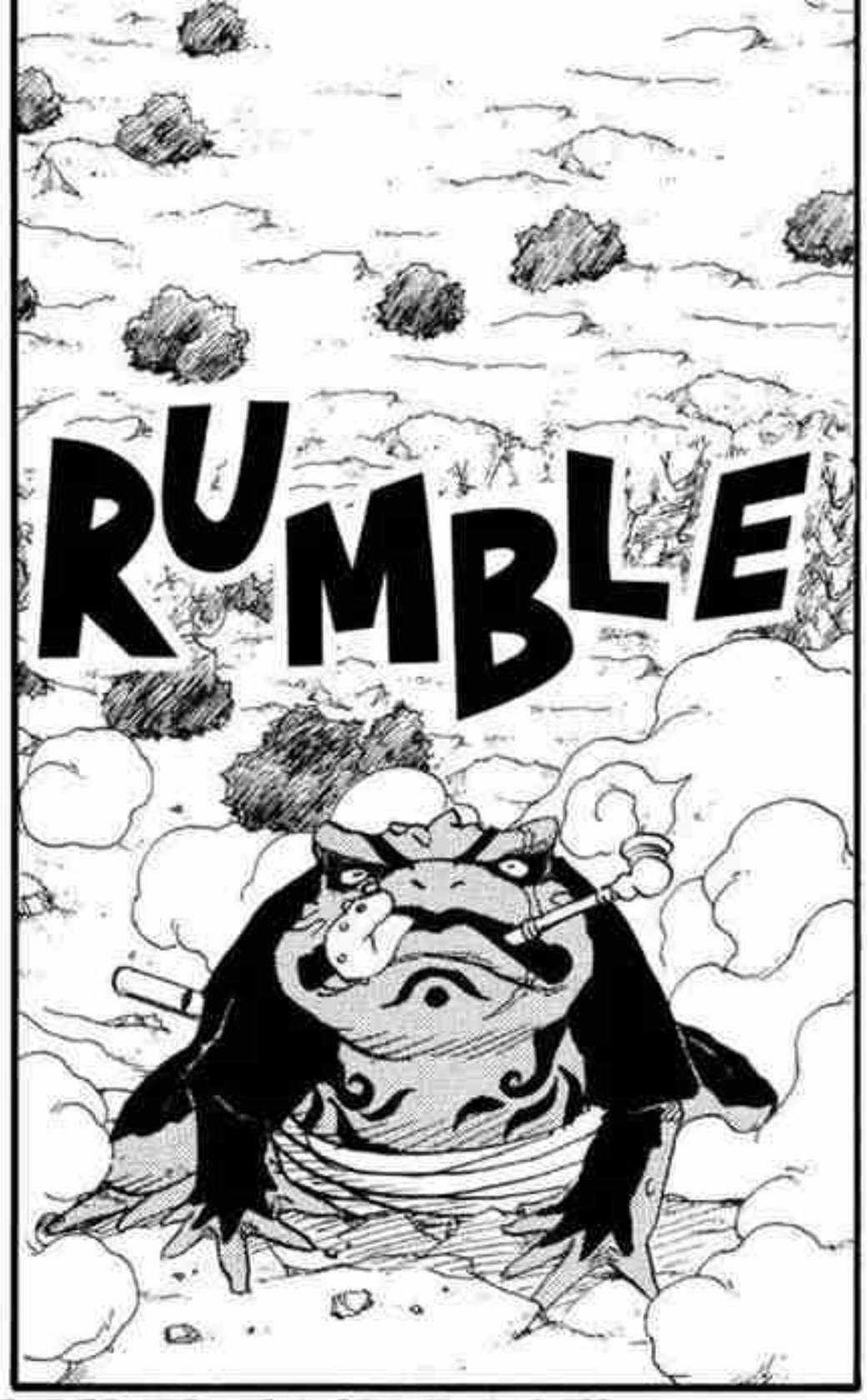
!
SLURP

WAAAH!

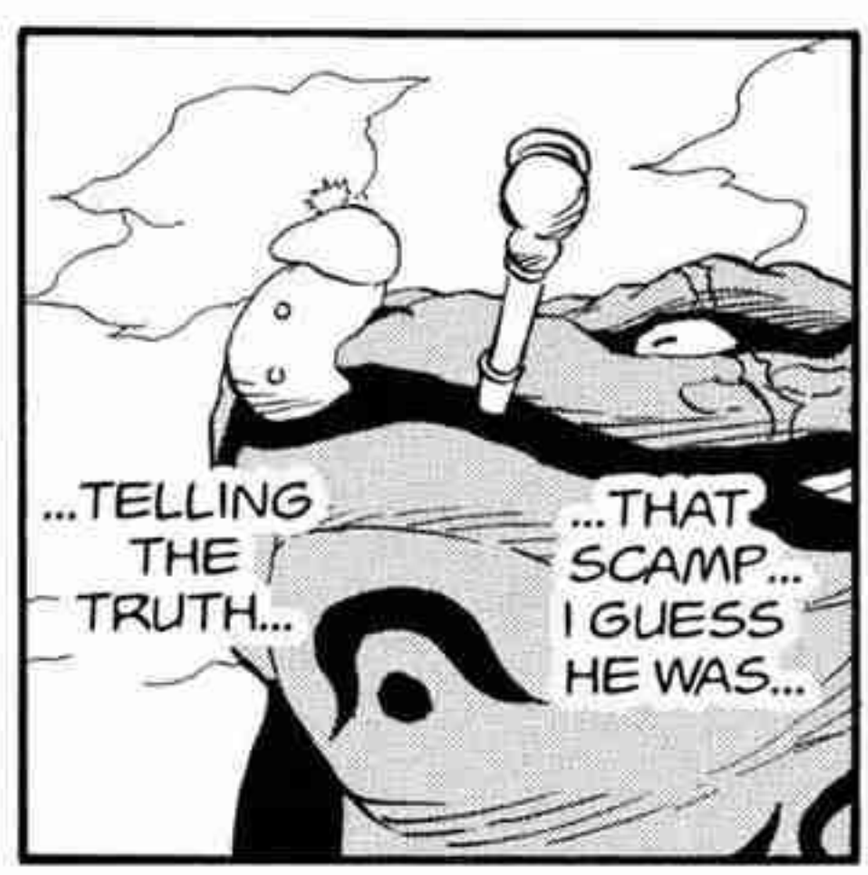
SPRONG

BOOM

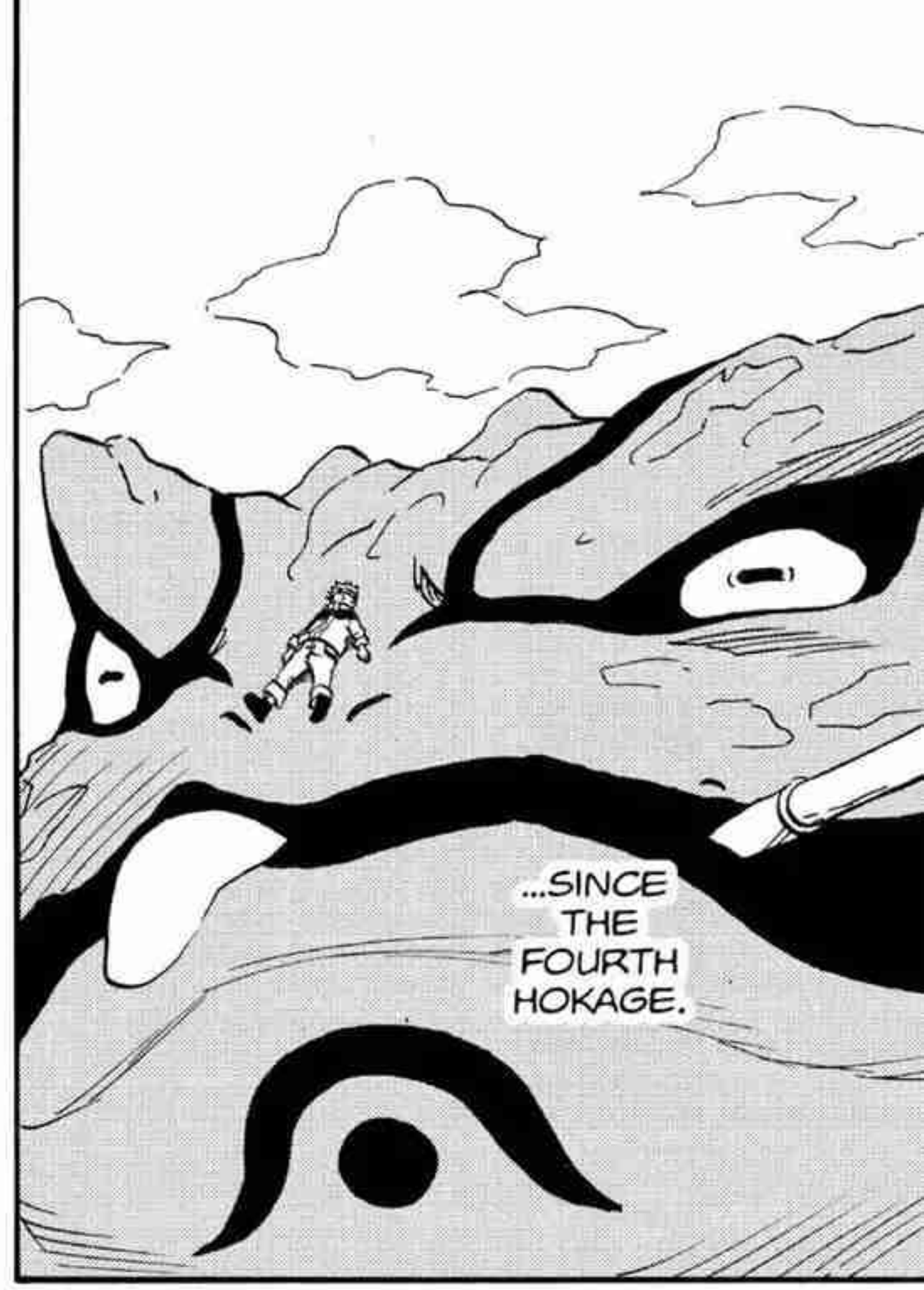




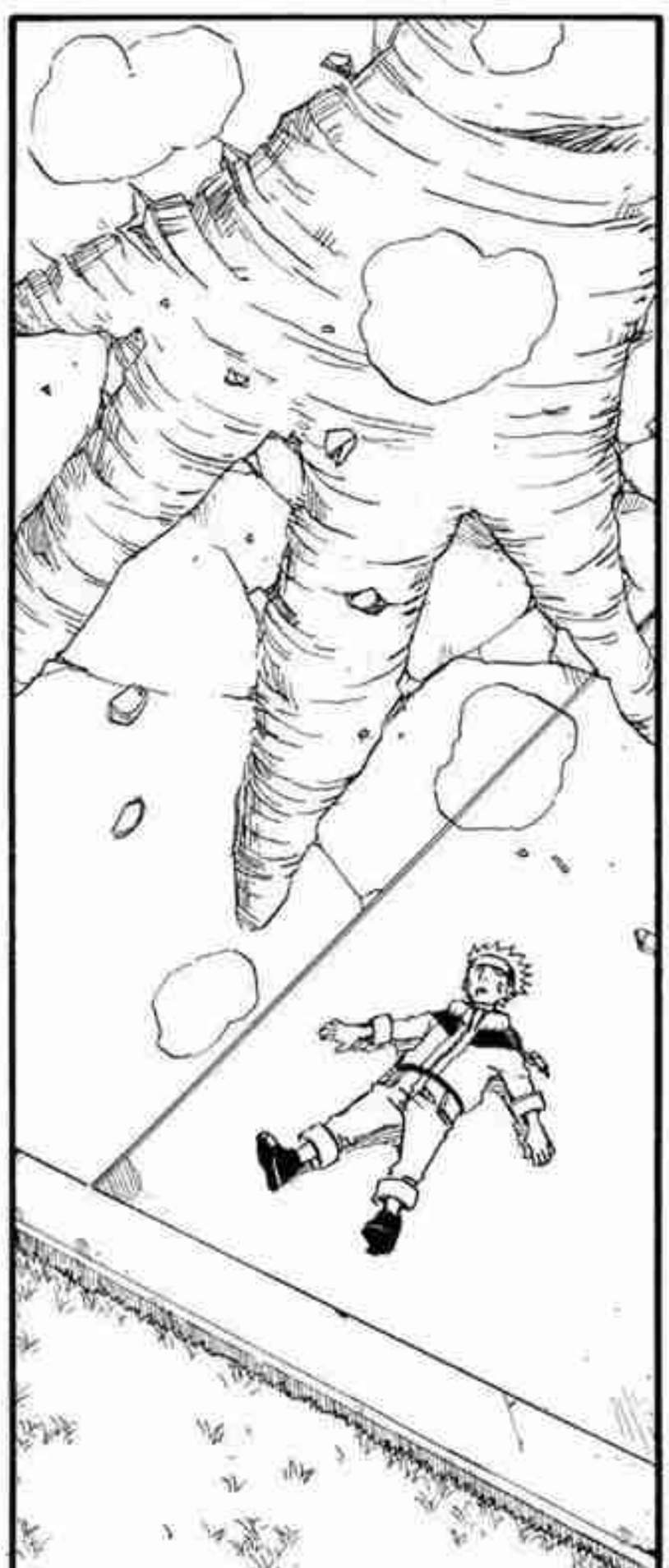
↑THE SCROLL LISTS THE NAMES OF JIRAIYA, THE FOURTH HOKAGE AND NARUTO.



WELL, I COULD GIVE HIM SOME OF MY ENERGY, BUT... IT'S BETTER TO TAKE HIM TO...
... HMPH... HE USED THE LAST OF HIS STRENGTH TO SUMMON ME.


...SINCE THE FOURTH HOKAGE.

KONOHA HOSPITAL



RRRUMBLE
KONOHA HOSPITAL

WHAT THE...?!

HM...?
...

WHERE'S THE PERVY SAGE?
...WHY AM I HERE WITH YOU...?
I MEAN... I'M HERE BECAUSE I CAME TO VISIT CHOJI, EVEN THOUGH IT'S A TOTAL DRAG...
WHEN I HEARD YOU WERE LAID OUT TOO, I POKED MY HEAD IN.
HUH? HOW SHOULD I KNOW?!

YOU FINALLY WOKE UP...
HEY...

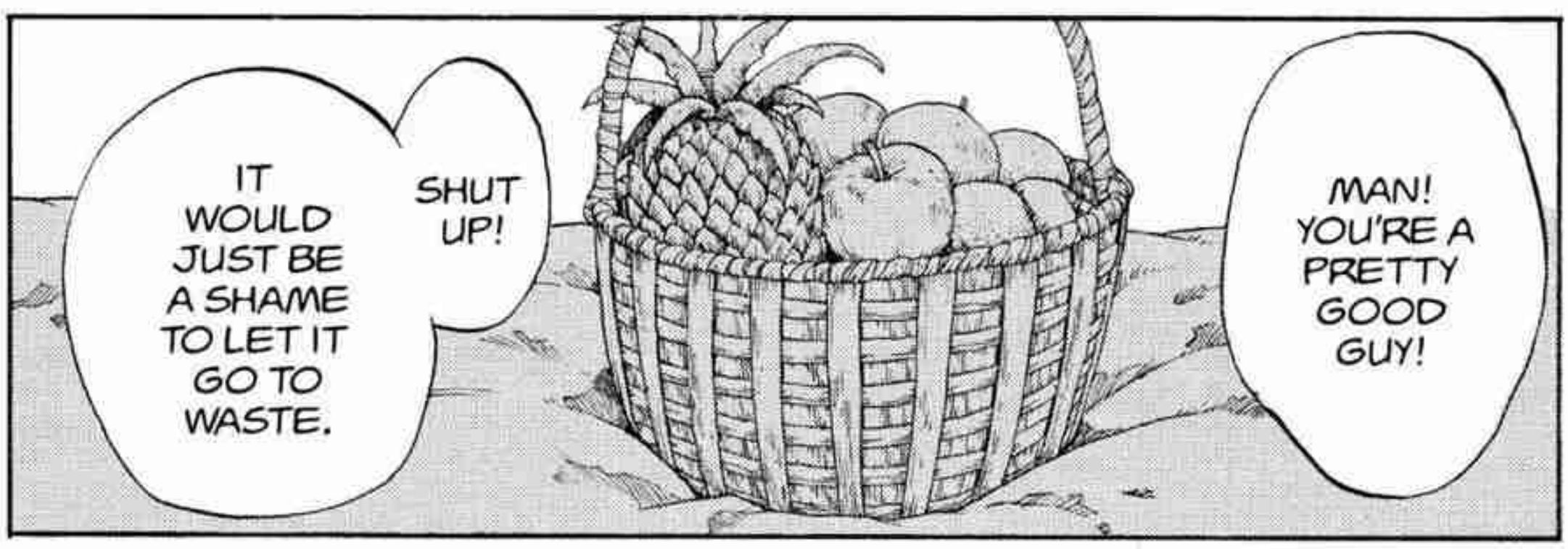
I HEARD YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR THREE DAYS.
THE HOSPITAL!
...WHERE... AM I...?

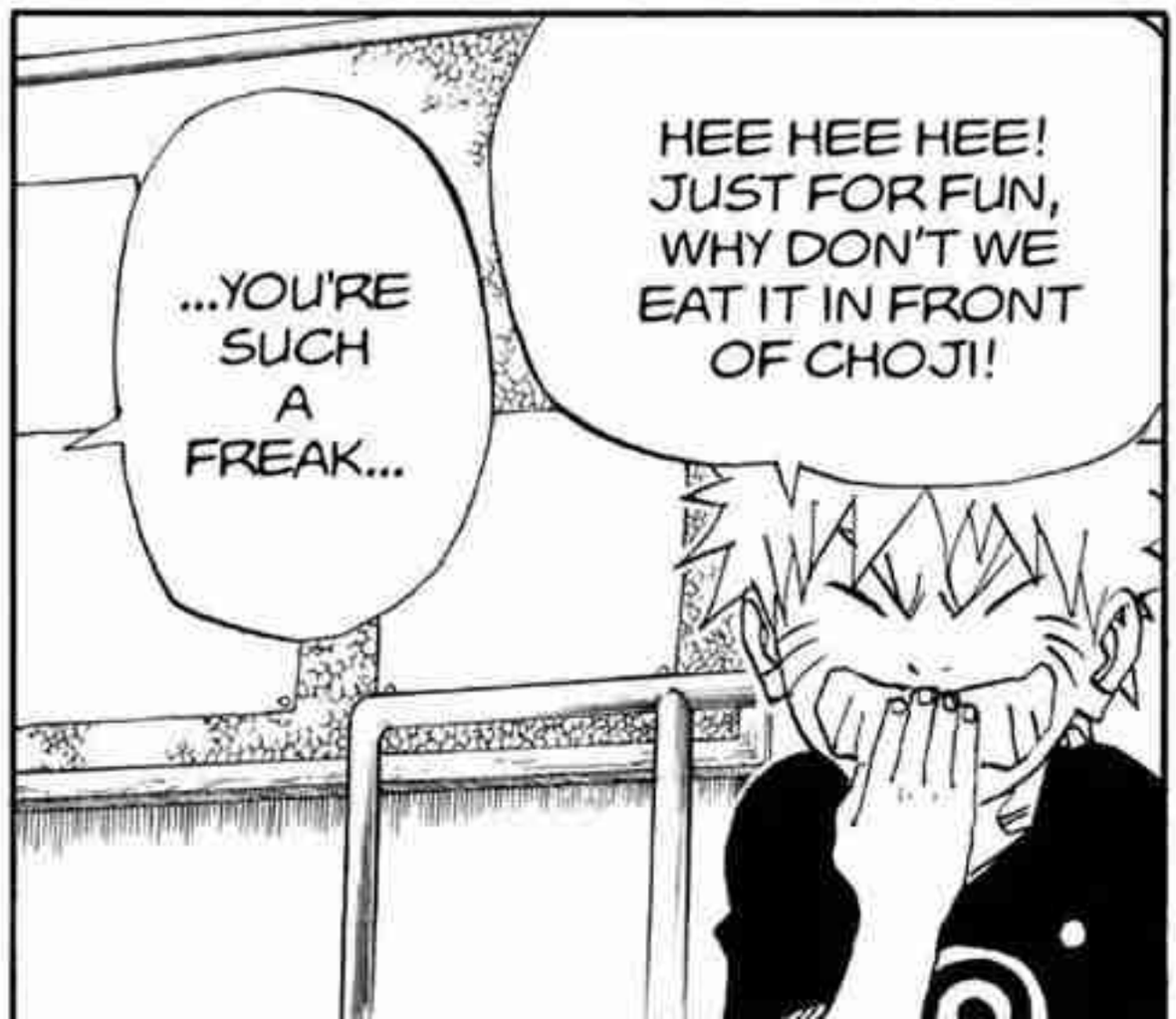
...AND GOT A SEVERE CASE OF INDIGESTION.
NOT QUITE... AFTER HIS MATCH, CHOJI ATE TOO MUCH BARBECUE...
WHAT?! HE GOT HURT THAT BAD?

THAT'S JUST LIKE CHOJI!
HA HA HA...

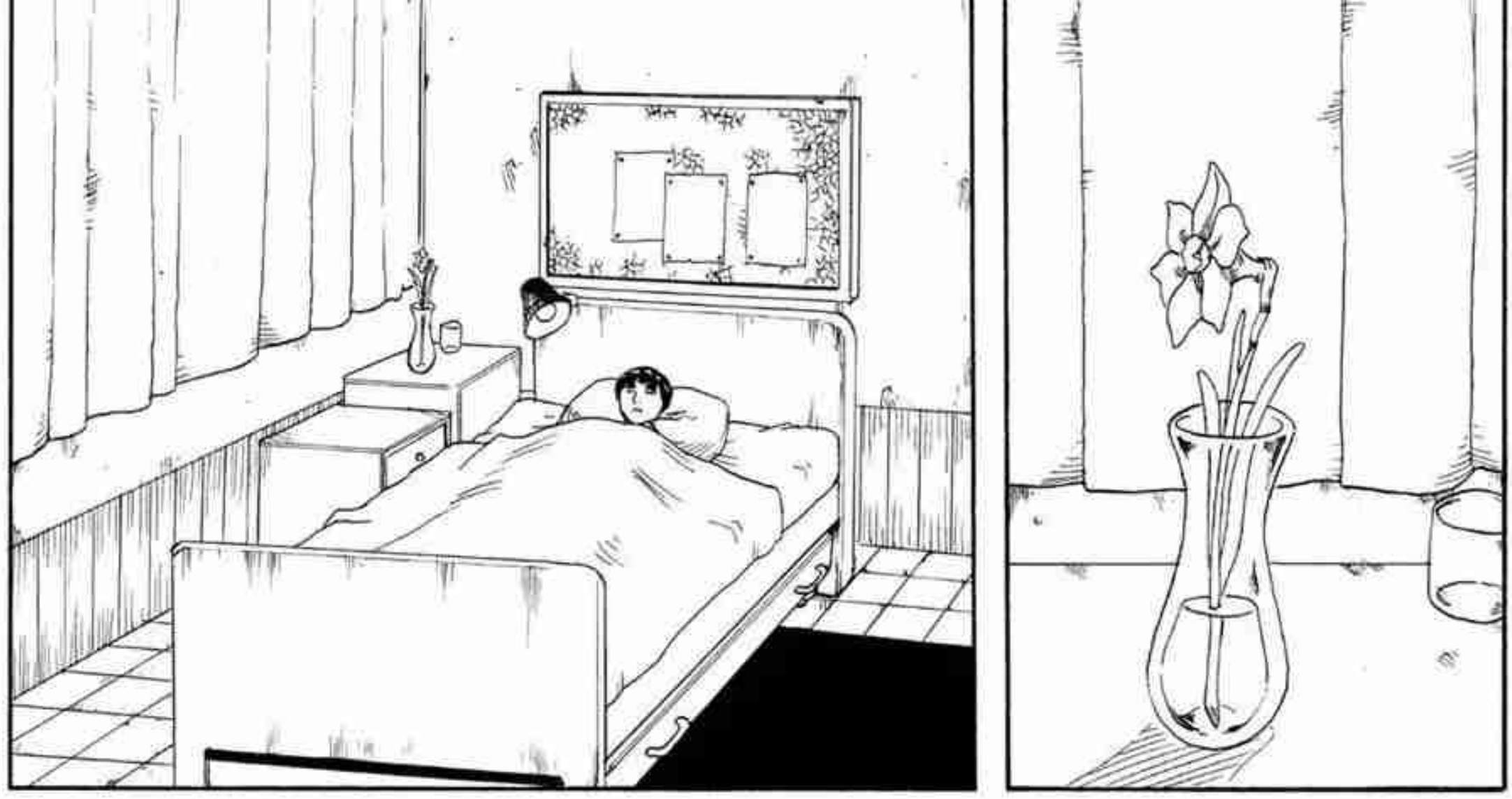
IT'S A HUGE PAIN... I BOUGHT THIS FRUIT BASKET FOR CHOJI, BUT HE'S NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE IT...
OH! RIGHT!
SHF
COOL! YOU SURE?!
...DOCTORS' ORDERS. SO LET'S EAT IT OURSELVES.

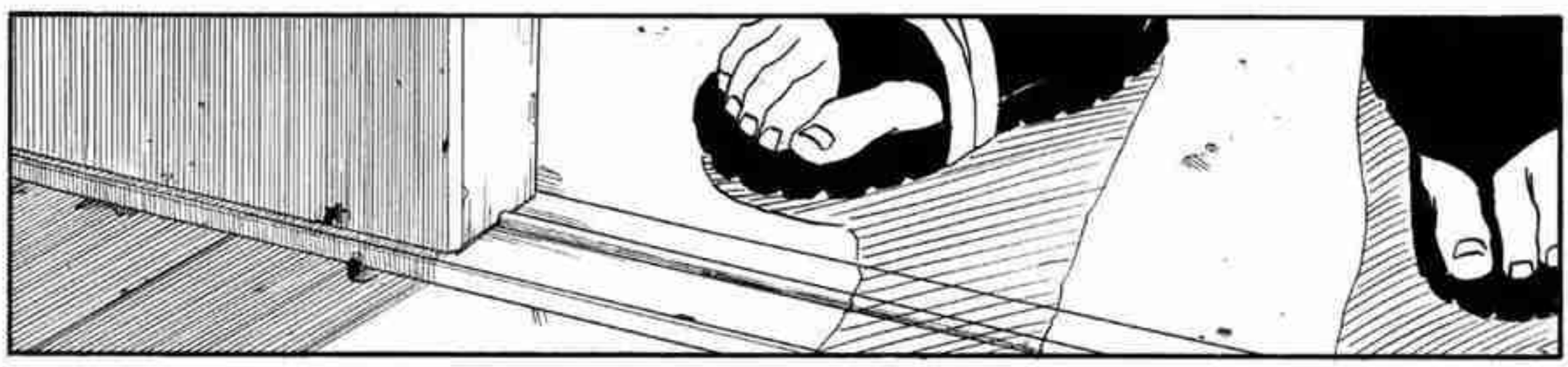
YOU TWO AREN'T THE TYPE TO GET FEMALE VISITORS, SO...
HMPH...

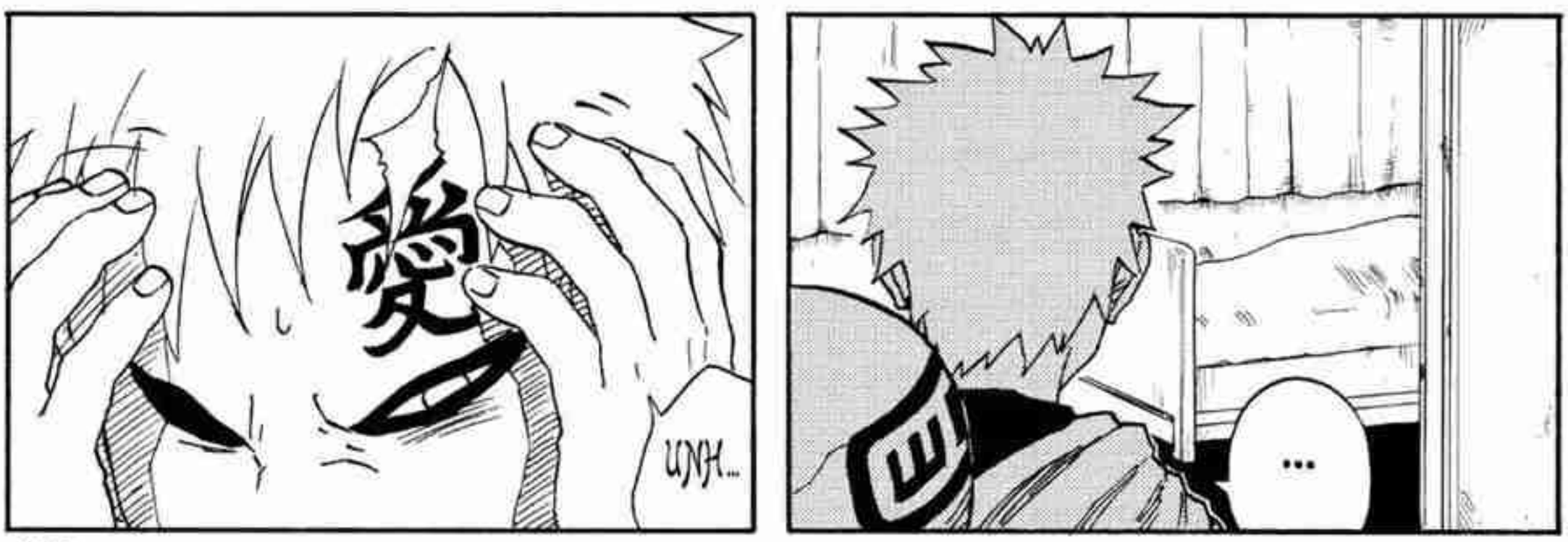

IT WOULD JUST BE A SHAME TO LET IT GO TO WASTE.
SHUT UP!
MAN! YOU'RE A PRETTY GOOD GUY!


...YOU'RE SUCH A FREAK...
HEE HEE HEE! JUST FOR FUN, WHY DON'T WE EAT IT IN FRONT OF CHOJI!

HUH? WHAT?!
...



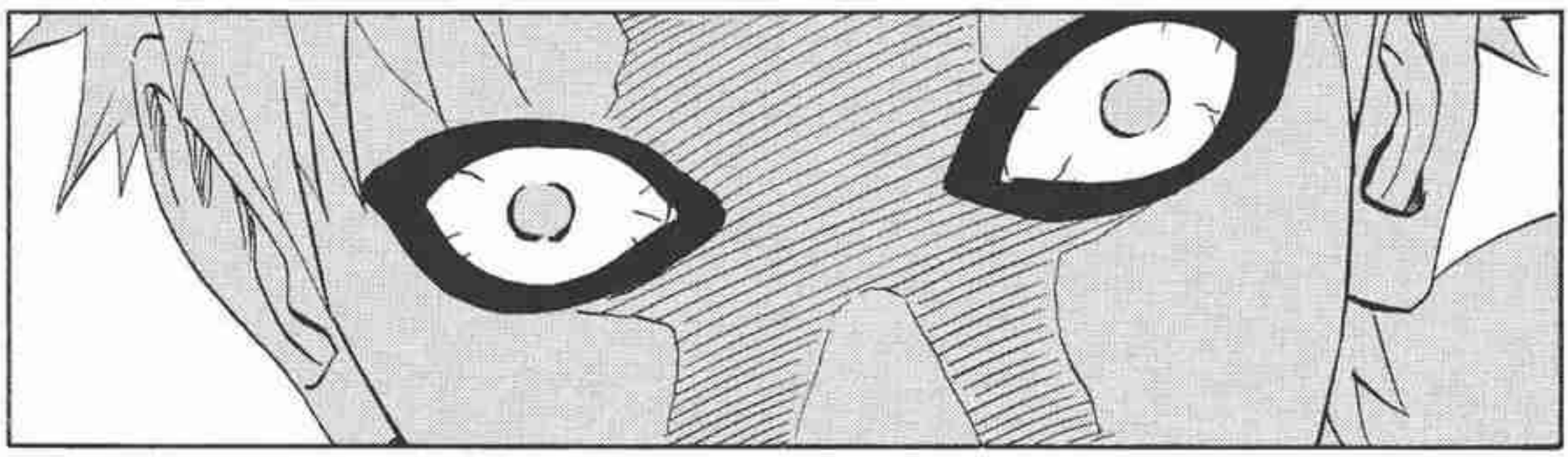



愛
UNH...
...

WHY...?
...

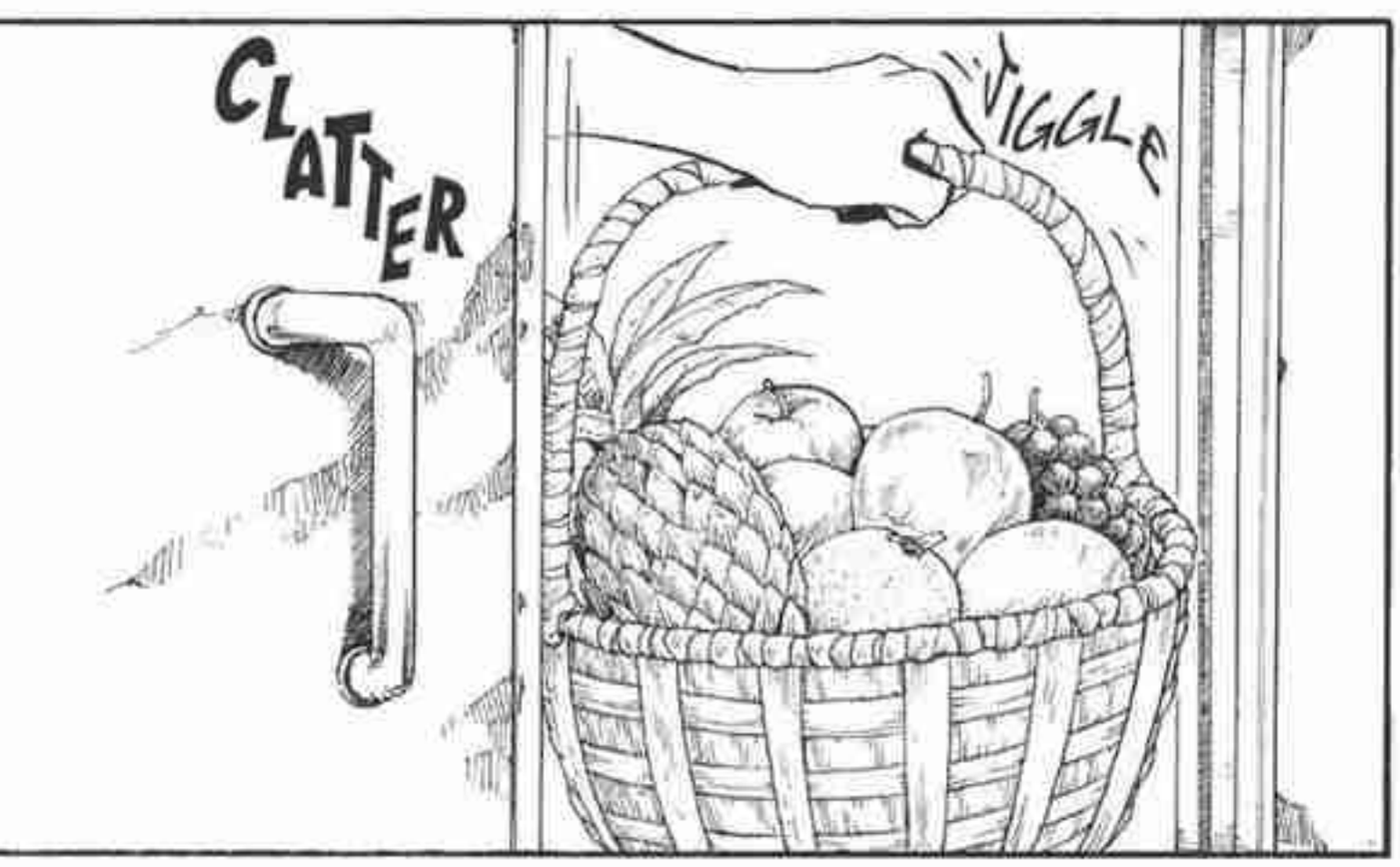
REACH

SKF



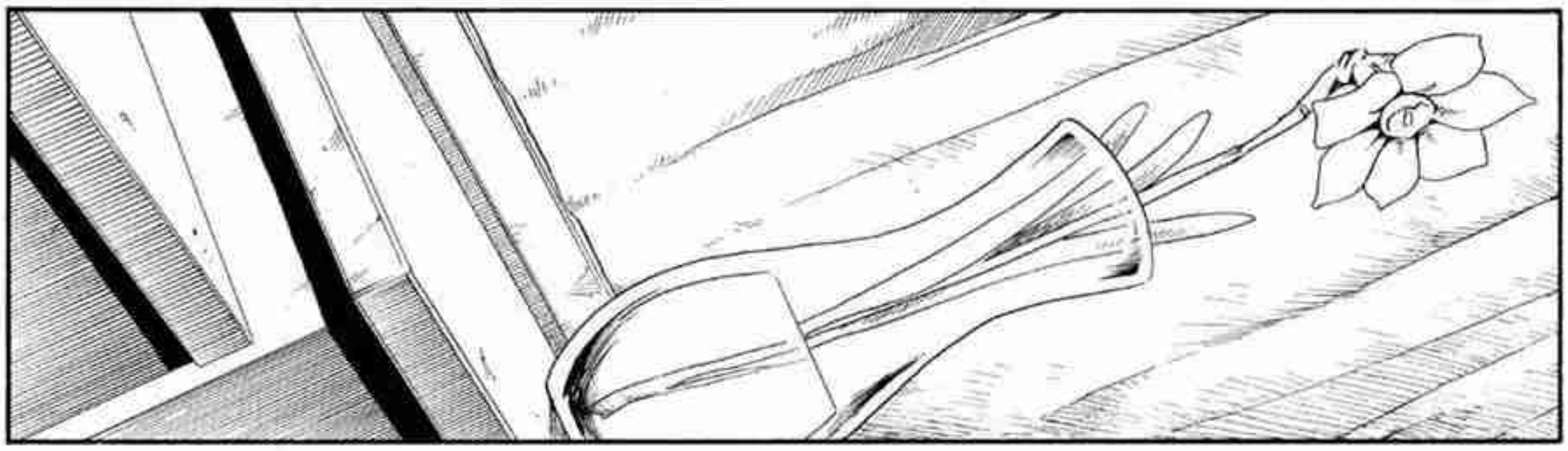
I'M STARVING!

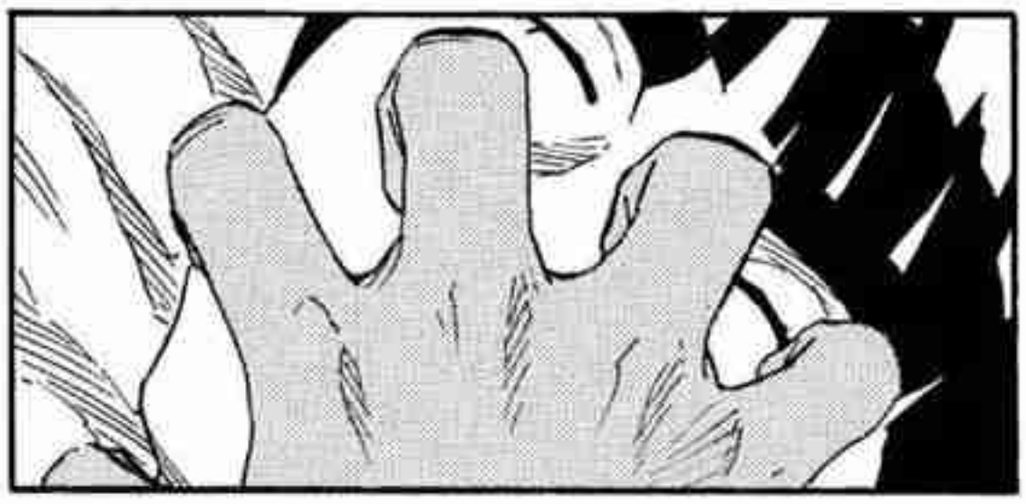
AAUGH!

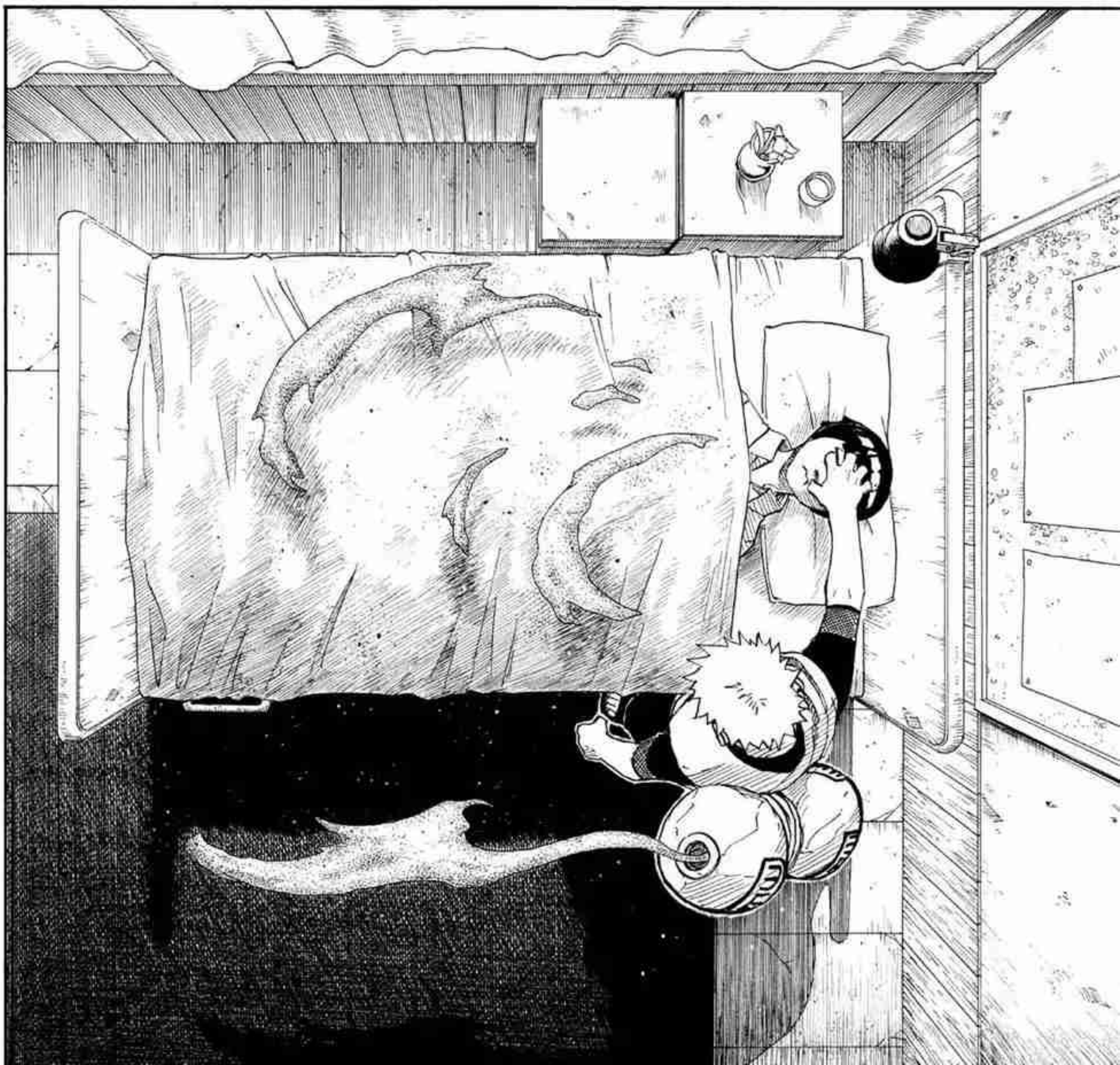

CLATTER
TIGGLE

NOK NOK
!

SHEESH! YOU'RE SO MEAN, SHIKAMARU!







READ THIS WAY
SLITHER
CLENCH
CURL
SLITHER
!

...I CAN'T... MOVE...
QUIVER
QUIVER

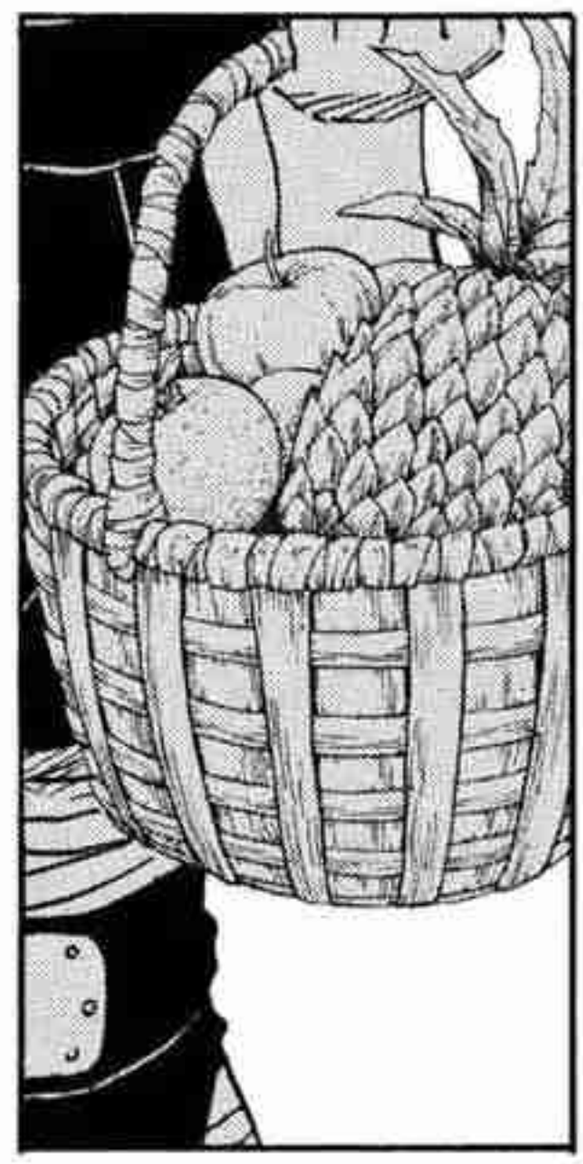
CRACK
WAAH!!

HEY, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

!!
POW

DON'T FORGET, WHILE I'VE GOT THE SHADOW POSSESSION THING GOING, ANYTHING YOU DO TO HIM, I FEEL IT TOO!
SORRY, SHIKAMARU...!
...HEY, NARUTO...

HEY CHOJI, FEELING ANY BETTER?
OH! INO!



愛
...

PITTER.
PITTER.

...I DO SO GET VISITS FROM GIRLS!
HEH HEH! SEE, SHIKAMARU...?

GLARE
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL?!

KISHIMOTO MASASHI'S MANGA REJECT SPECIAL NO. 5!

THIS SKETCH IS FROM A MAFIA MANGA CALLED "MARIO" THAT I INITIALLY HAD THE IDEA TO CREATE BEFORE *NARUTO*. I'VE GOT A WHOLE ROUGH DRAFT ALREADY WORKED OUT, SO IT'S A PROJECT THAT I'M STILL KEEPING WARM, AND I DEFINITELY PLAN TO DRAW IT SOME DAY. I HAVE OVER 160 PAGES, AND I'M NOT SURE WHEN I'LL HAVE TIME TO WORK ON IT AGAIN... BUT I'M POSITIVE IT'S THE FUNNIEST OF ALL OF THE STORIES I'VE DRAWN SO FAR.

Number 97:

SLITHER

SLITHER

I WANTED TO KILL HIM...

HEY! WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO DO TO BUSHY BROWS?!

READ THIS WAY
HE SHOULD BE PARALYZED BY MY SHADOW POSSESSION, BUT...
HOW CAN HE BE SO CALM?
!
WHAT...?!
DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL VENDETTA OR SOMETHING?
AND WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO DO THAT?
YOU WON YOUR MATCH AGAINST HIM!
I WANT TO KILL HIM BECAUSE... I JUST WANT TO KILL HIM.
NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT.
...?!

ACTUALLY, HE'S REALLY CREEPY...! I'VE GOT GOOSE-BUMPS...!
YOU REALLY WEREN'T RAISED RIGHT, WERE YOU?! YOU'RE SO SELF-CENTERED...
IF HE DECIDES TO GO FOR IT, HE MAY BE TOO MUCH FOR NARUTO AND ME TO HANDLE ALONE...

DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THE HECK YOU'RE SAYING?!
DO YOU?!

HEY! QUIT IT, NARUTO!
WHAT?! JUST TRY IT...!
JAB

...WHAT DO WE DO...?
...GEEZ...

IF YOU TRY TO INTERFERE...
...I'LL KILL YOU TOO.

BUT YOU SEE... NARUTO AND ME, WE'RE BOTH PRETTY CAPABLE FIGHTERS, TOO.
WE BOTH STILL HAVE MOVES IN RESERVE THAT NOBODY'S SEEN YET!

LET'S SEE IF I CAN PULL ONE OVER ON HIM...
...

I'VE SEEN YOU FIGHT... I KNOW YOU'RE STRONG.

BUT IF YOU SWEAR TO LEAVE LEE ALONE...
...WE'LL LET YOU LEAVE. NO HARM DONE!
PLUS, IT'LL BE TWO AGAINST ONE.
SO YOU'LL BE AT A DIS-ADVANTAGE.

TH... THIS GUY...!

IF YOU KEEP INTER-FERING, I'LL KILL YOU.
愛
I'LL SAY THIS ONCE MORE...

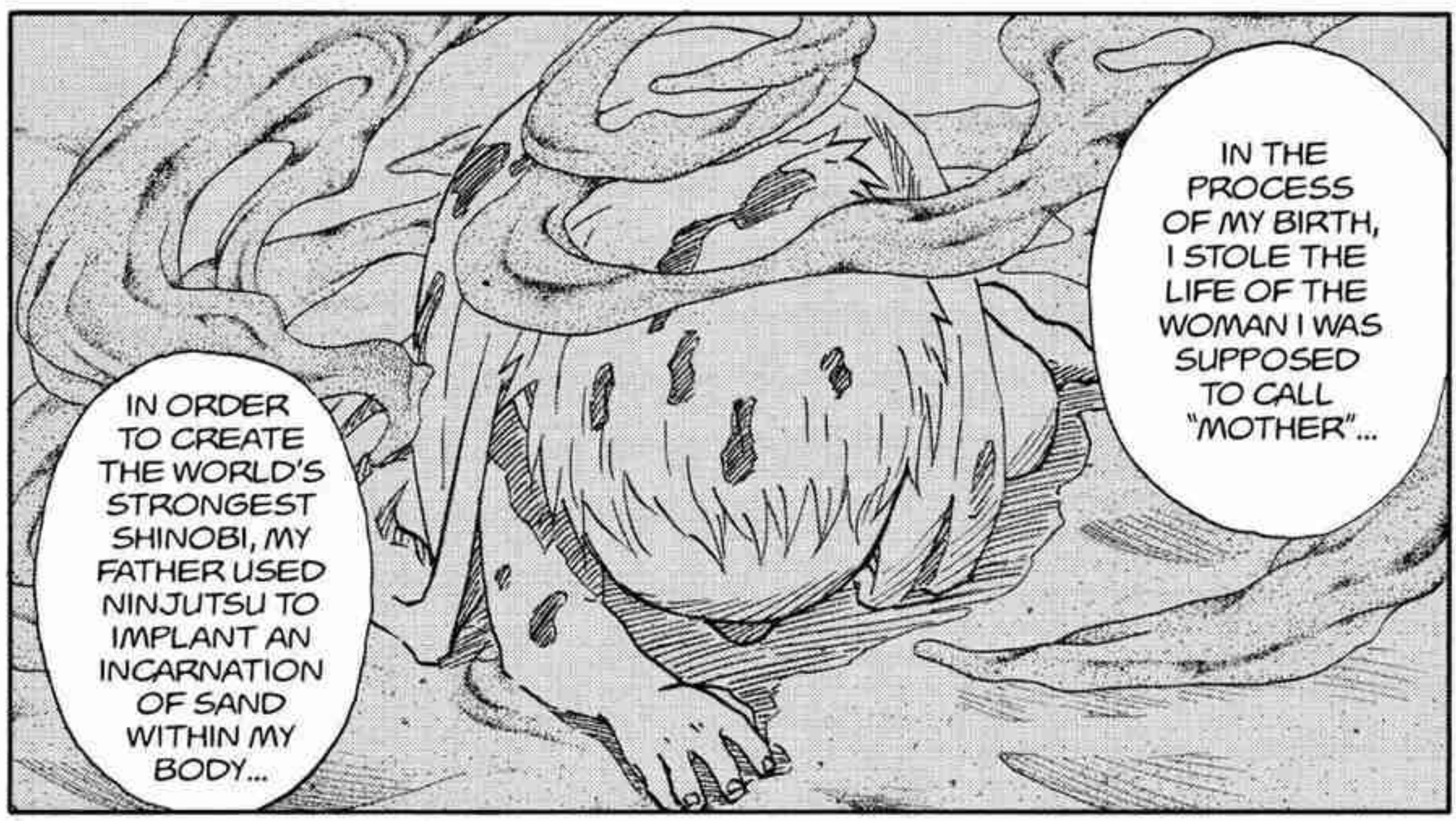
I TOLD YOU TO QUIT IT!
DON'T FORGET... THIS GUY HAS MONSTER-LIKE STRENGTH!!
YOU CAN'T KILL ME!

BUT I'VE GOT A REAL LIVE MONSTER INSIDE OF ME!
I WON'T LOSE TO SOMEBODY LIKE HIM!

YOU IDIOT! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, EGGING HIM ON LIKE THAT?!

...
愛

READ THIS WAY
JUST LIKE YOU SAID, I WASN'T "RAISED RIGHT"...
?
!
ACTUALLY... I'VE GOT ONE OF THOSE TOO.
愛
A MONSTER, EH...?


IN ORDER TO CREATE THE WORLD'S STRONGEST SHINOBI, MY FATHER USED NINJUTSU TO IMPLANT AN INCARNATION OF SAND WITHIN MY BODY...
IN THE PROCESS OF MY BIRTH, I STOLE THE LIFE OF THE WOMAN I WAS SUPPOSED TO CALL "MOTHER"...

I WAS BORN A MONSTER!

KNOWN AS SHUKAKU, IT WAS THE SPIRIT OF A FORMER SUNAGAKURE ELDER...
...THAT HAD BEEN SEALED INSIDE A TEAKETTLE.

!

...AN INCAR-NATION OF SAND ...?!

TO GO THAT FAR... THAT'S CRAZY.
A TYPE OF POSSESSION ART THAT CAUSES A FETUS TO BE FORCIBLY POSSESSED...?

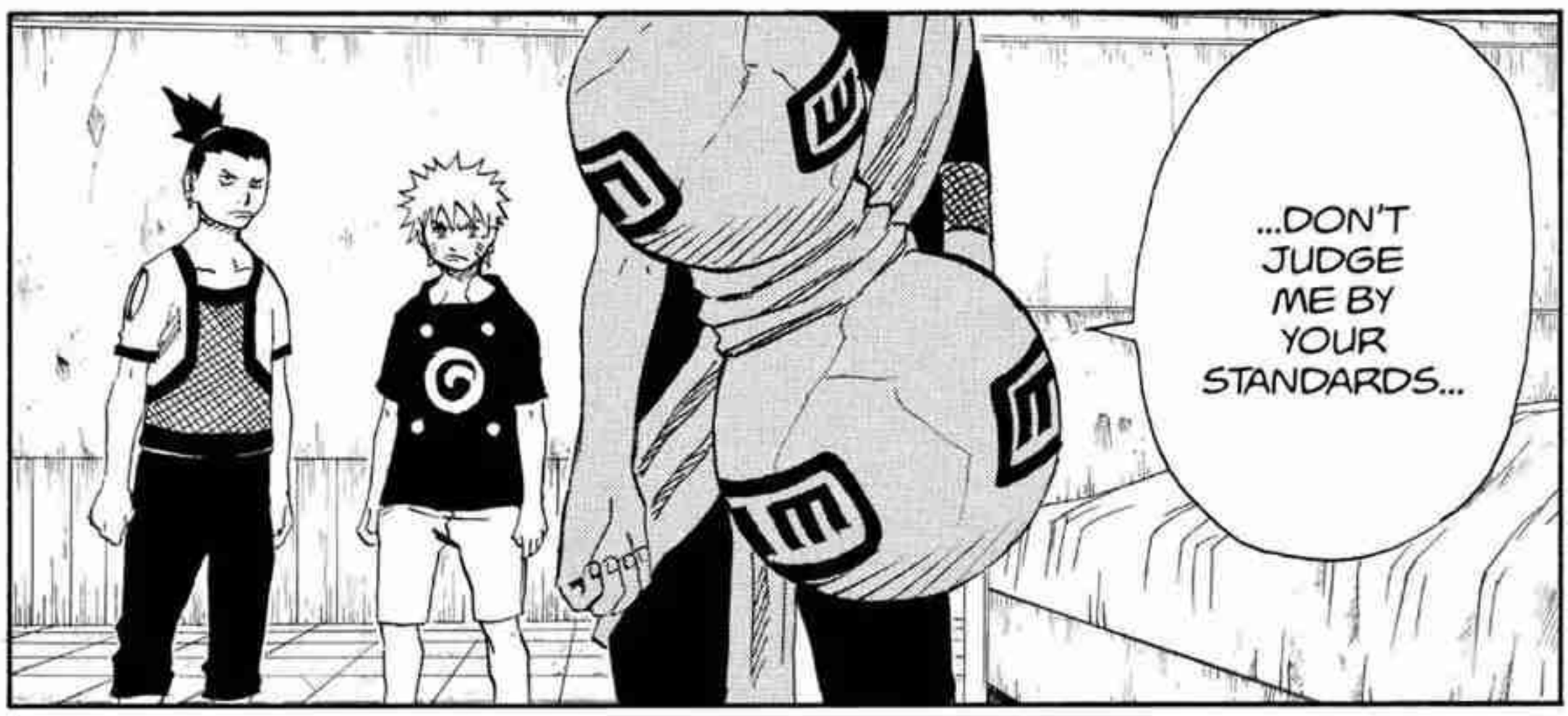
...
愛

...INSIDE OF HIM, TOO...!
...HE'S GOT... SOMETHING...

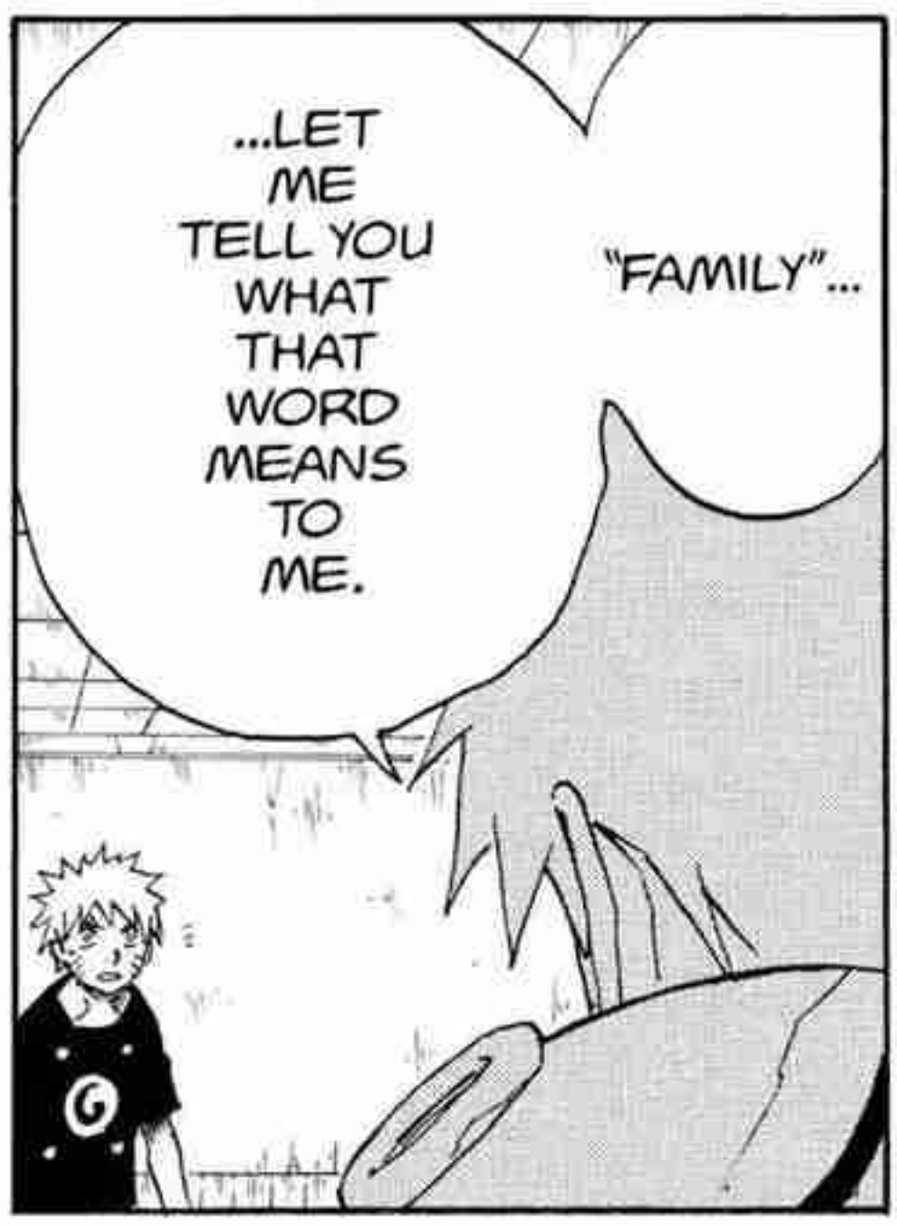
...

LOVE?

HEH... WHAT KIND OF PARENT DOES A THING LIKE THAT?!
WHAT TWISTED LOVE.


...DON'T JUDGE ME BY YOUR STANDARDS...

?!


...LET ME TELL YOU WHAT THAT WORD MEANS TO ME.
"FAMILY"...

!

愛
...CONNECTED BY HATRED AND MURDEROUS INTENT.
MERE HULLS OF FLESH...

...SO THAT I COULD BE BROUGHT TO LIFE AS THE VILLAGE'S GREATEST MASTER-PIECE...
...AND AS KAZEKAGE'S SON.
MY MOTHER'S LIFE WAS SACRIFICED...

!

愛
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT *THAT* WAS LOVE...

...

MY FATHER TAUGHT ME SECRET SHINOBI SKILLS, ONE AFTER ANOTHER.
I WAS RAISED IN ISOLATION, SPOILED AND OVERPRO-TECTED...

READ THIS WAY
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

...UNTIL THE INCIDENT.

...WHAT INCI-DENT...?!
?

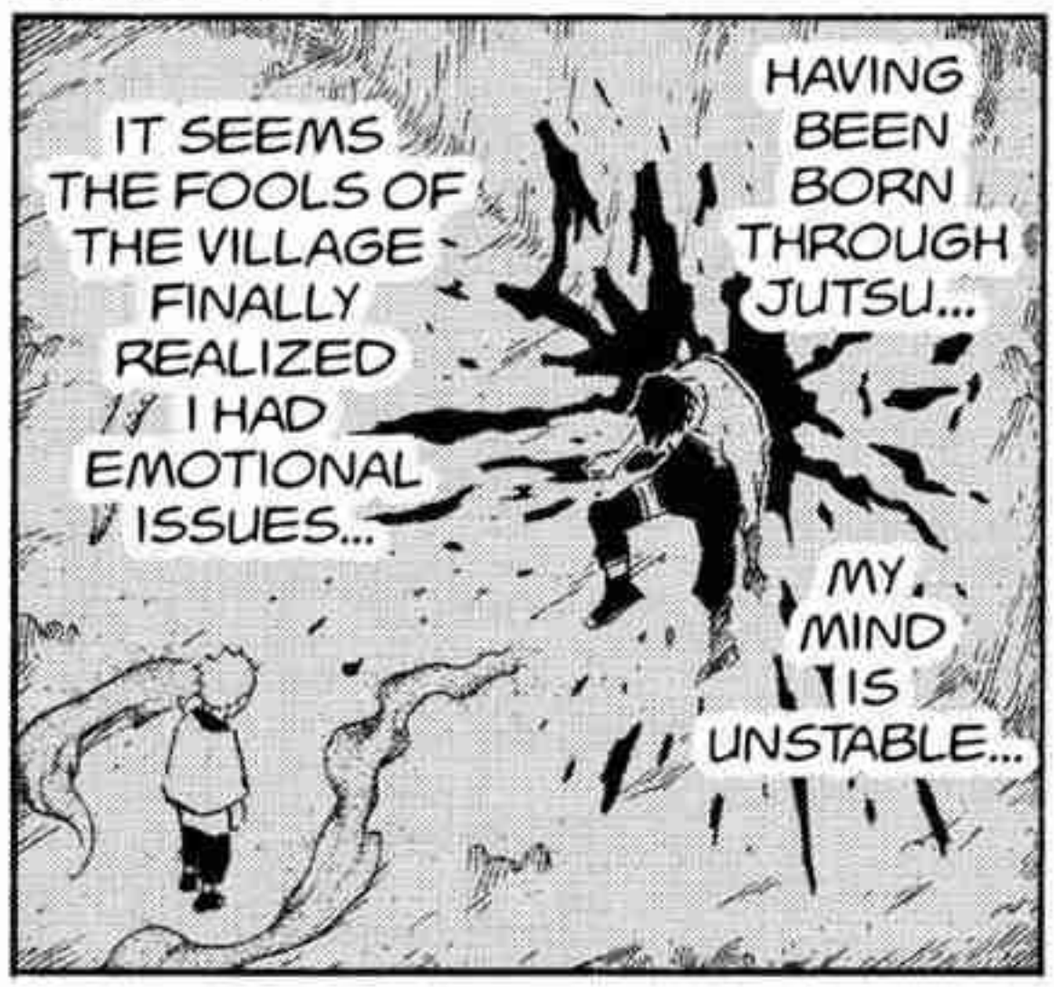
...SO WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED?!

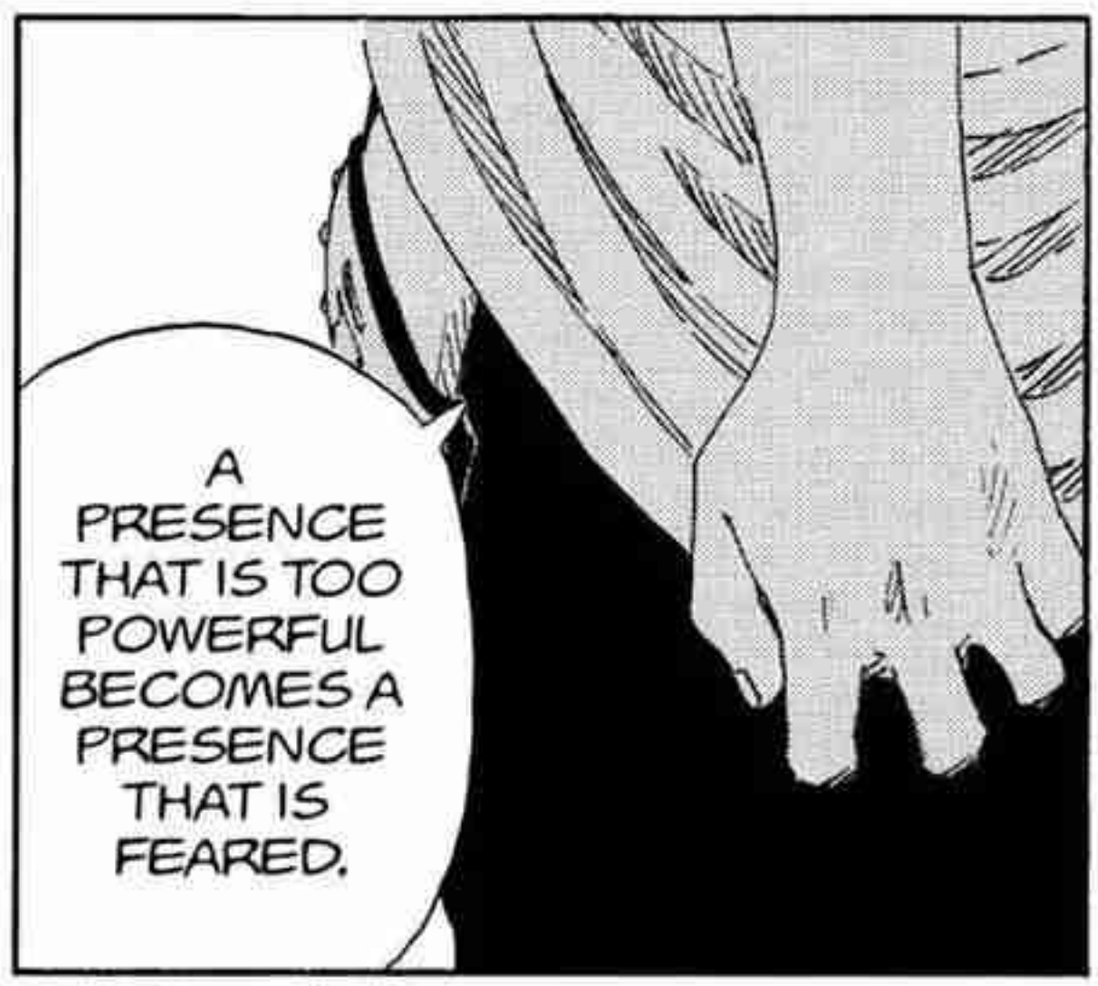
...

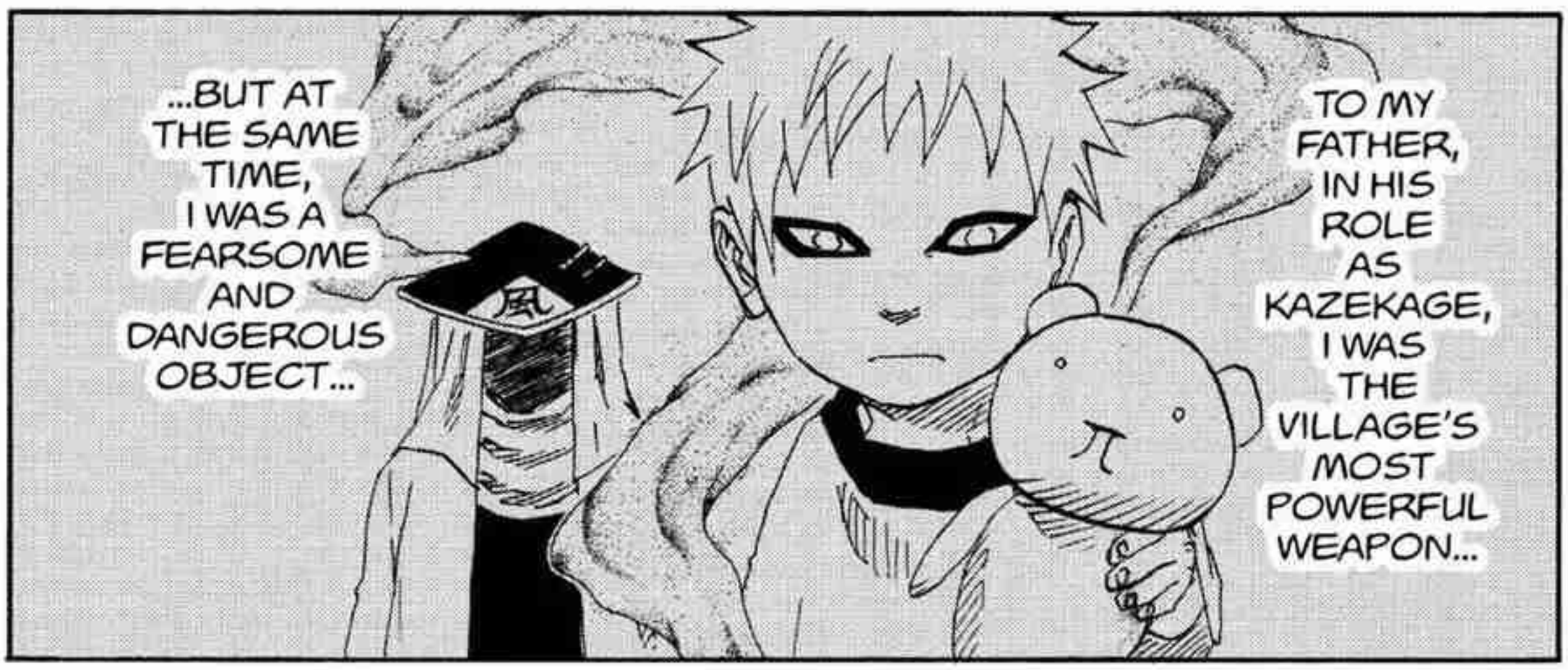
...

FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS... EVER SINCE I TURNED SIX...

...MY FATHER HAS BEEN TRYING TO ASSASSINATE ME. I'VE LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY ATTEMPTS HE'S MADE...


IT SEEMS THE FOOLS OF THE VILLAGE FINALLY REALIZED I HAD EMOTIONAL ISSUES...
HAVING BEEN BORN THROUGH JUTSU...
MY MIND IS UNSTABLE...


A PRESENCE THAT IS TOO POWERFUL BECOMES A PRESENCE THAT IS FEARED.


...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I WAS A FEARSOME AND DANGEROUS OBJECT...
TO MY FATHER, IN HIS ROLE AS KAZEKAGE, I WAS THE VILLAGE'S MOST POWERFUL WEAPON...

PRIOR TO THAT, I HAD MERELY BEEN HANDLED WITH CARE...
...LIKE ANY OTHER HAZARDOUS INSTRUMENT.

THEY DETERMINED THAT I WAS TOO GREAT A LIABILITY.
SO APPARENTLY, WHEN I TURNED SIX...

TO THEM, I AM NOW A RELIC OF THE PAST THAT THEY WISH TO ERASE AND FORGET.

...

AT FIRST, WHEN I ASKED MYSELF THAT, I HAD NO ANSWER.

SO... FOR WHAT PURPOSE DO I EXIST? WHY AM I ALIVE?

WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT...?

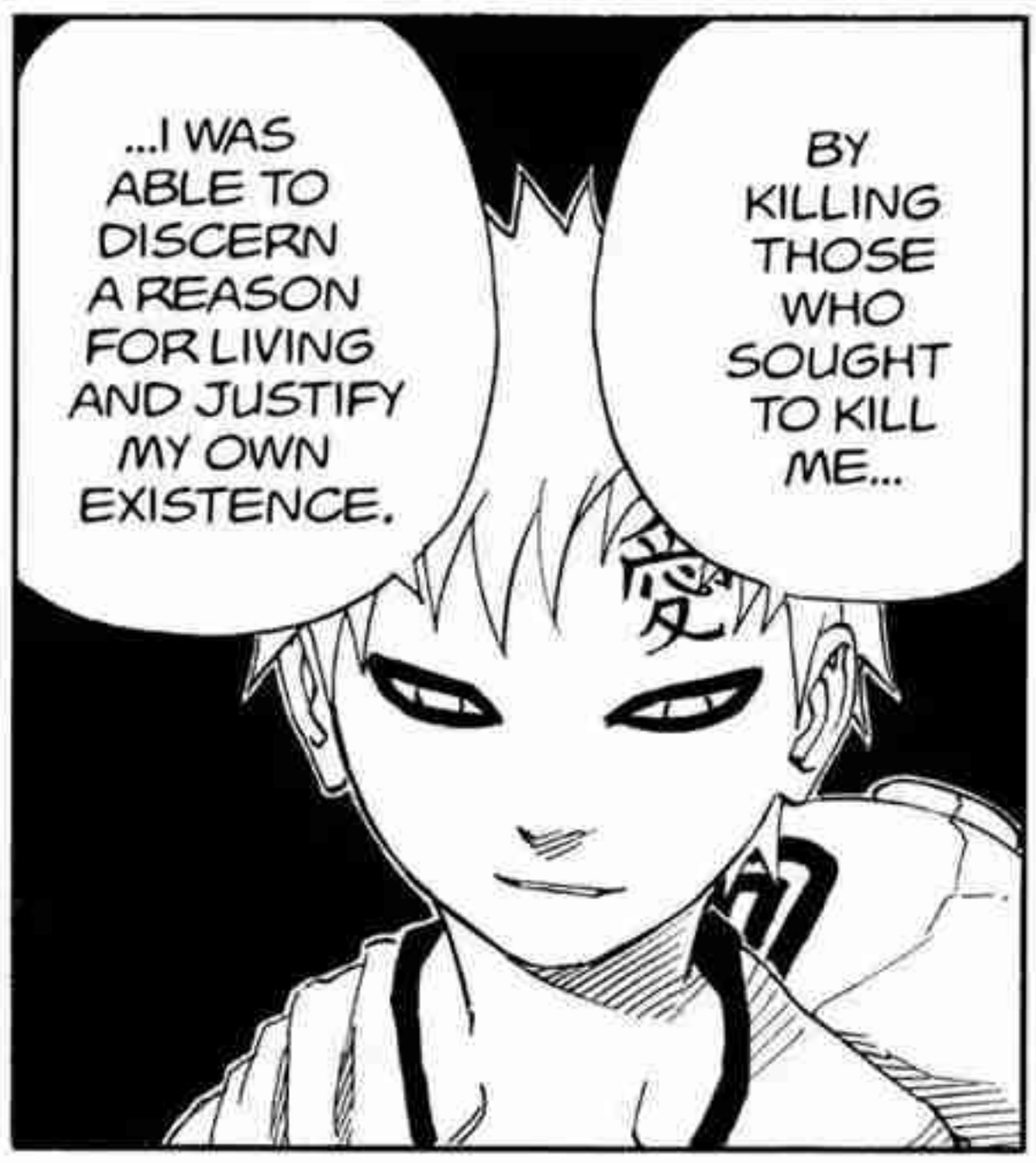
...I GET IT...

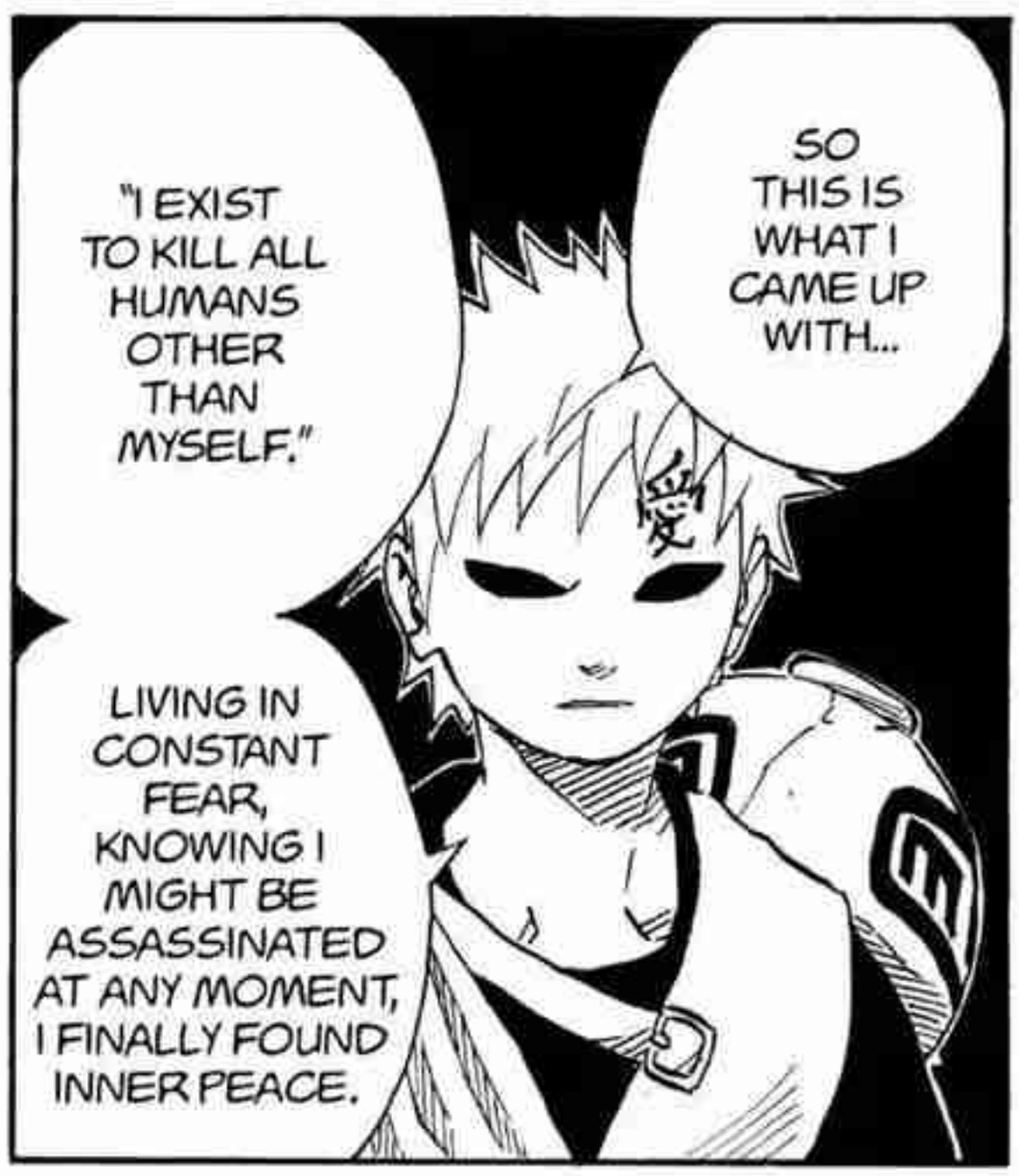
...I THINK I...

OTHERWISE... I MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD.

BUT WHILE I CONTINUE TO LIVE, I NEED A **REASON.**

...HE'S JUST LIKE ME...!
...THIS GUY...

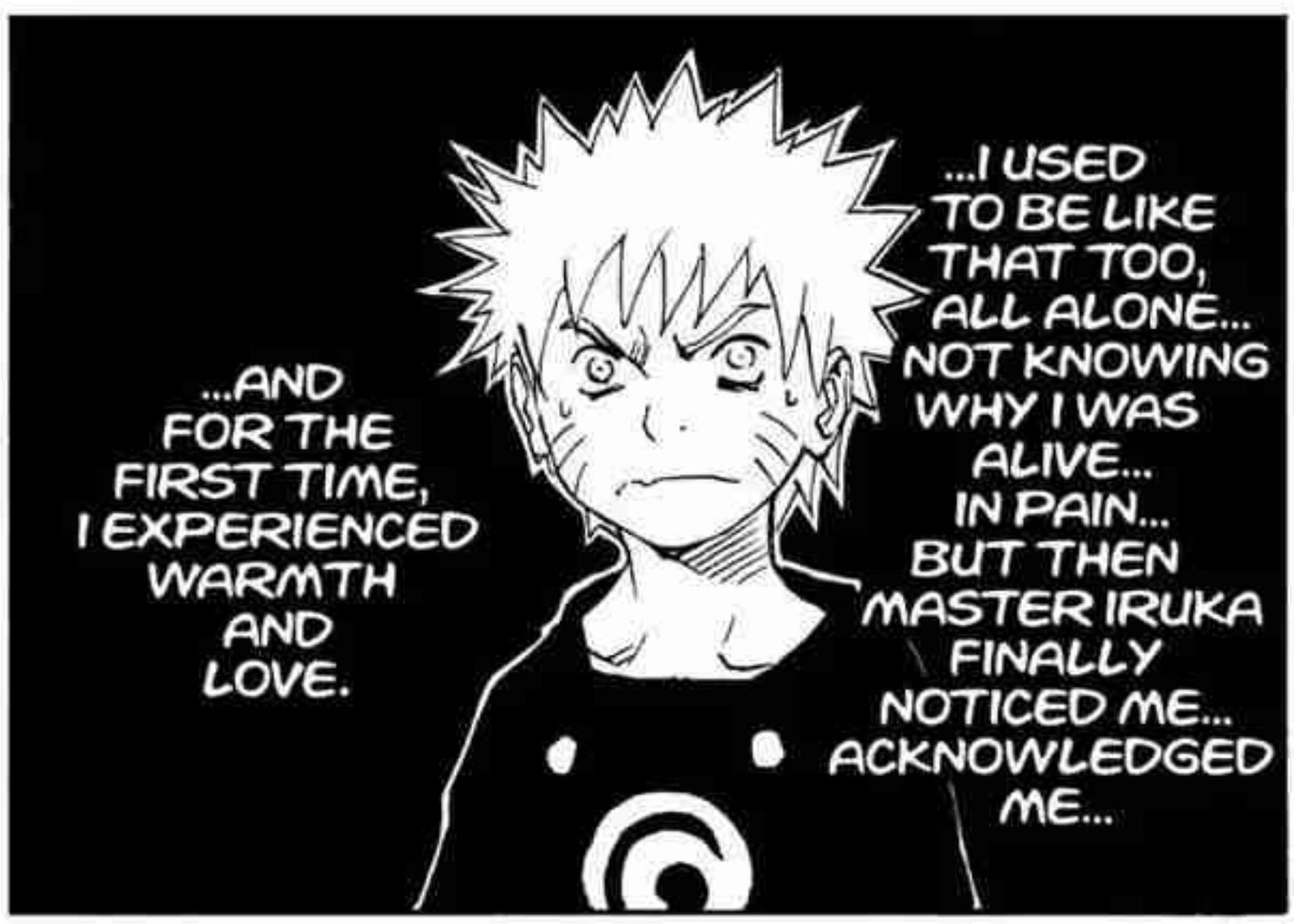

...I WAS ABLE TO DISCERN A REASON FOR LIVING AND JUSTIFY MY OWN EXISTENCE.
BY KILLING THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO KILL ME...


"I EXIST TO KILL ALL HUMANS OTHER THAN MYSELF."
SO THIS IS WHAT I CAME UP WITH...
LIVING IN CONSTANT FEAR, KNOWING I MIGHT BE ASSASSINATED AT ANY MOMENT, I FINALLY FOUND INNER PEACE.

...FOR AS LONG AS THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE FOR ME TO KILL...
THEY ALLOW ME TO EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF LIVING...
愛

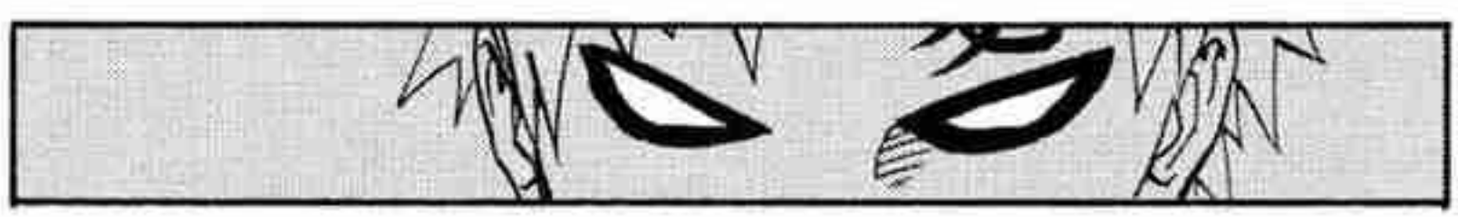
IF ALL OTHER PEOPLE EXIST TO MAGNIFY THAT LOVE, THEN THERE IS NO MORE SPLENDID WORLD THAN THIS ONE.
I WOULD FIGHT ONLY FOR MYSELF AND LOVE ONLY MYSELF.
愛

THIS IS SCARY...
WH...WHAT THE...?


...I USED TO BE LIKE THAT TOO, ALL ALONE... NOT KNOWING WHY I WAS ALIVE... IN PAIN... BUT THEN MASTER IRUKA FINALLY NOTICED ME... ACKNOWLEDGED ME...
...AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, I EXPERIENCED WARMTH AND LOVE.

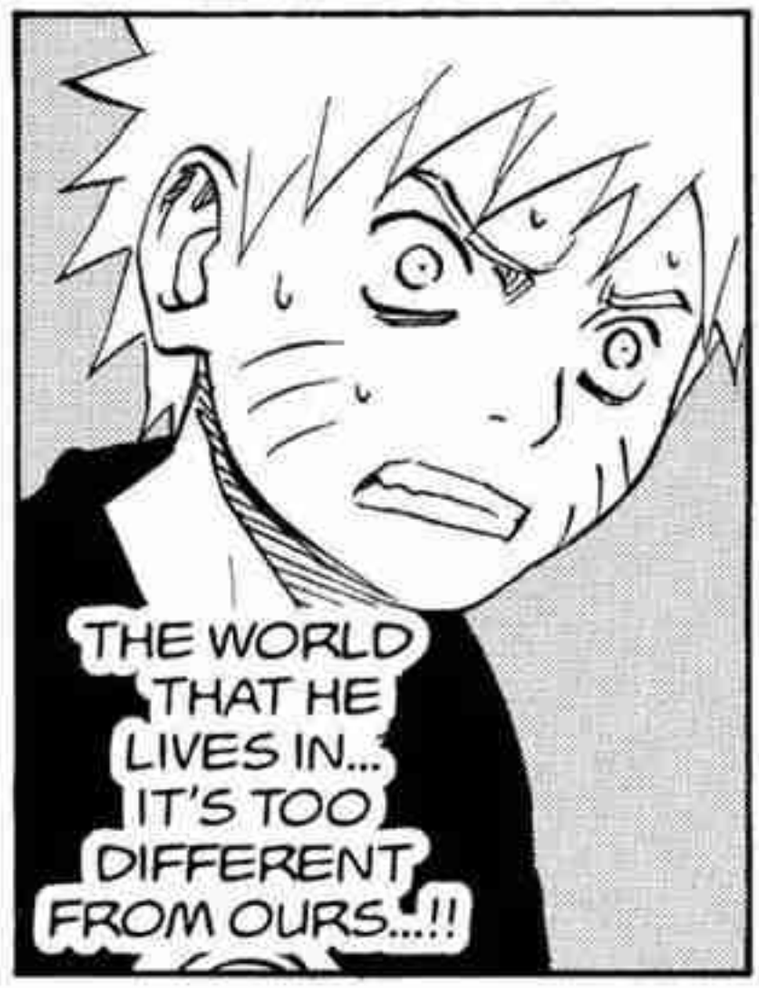
BUT THIS GUY...

HE'S STILL LIVING ALL ALONE...
...ONLY ABLE TO ASSERT HIS EXISTENCE BY KILLING OTHERS...



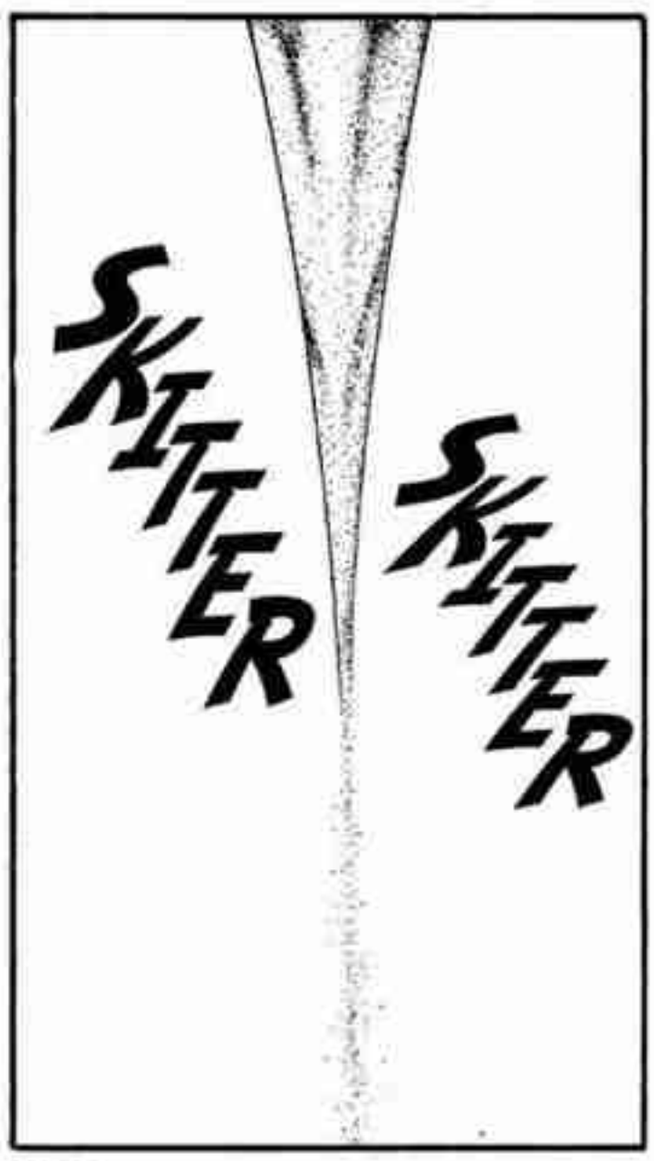
...THEN I WILL NOT CEASE TO EXIST.

愛


THE WORLD THAT HE LIVES IN... IT'S TOO DIFFERENT FROM OURS...!!

I NEVER KNEW PEOPLE LIKE HIM EXISTED...

...THAT WE CAN WIN AGAINST HIM...
THERE'S JUST NO WAY...


SKITTER
SKITTER

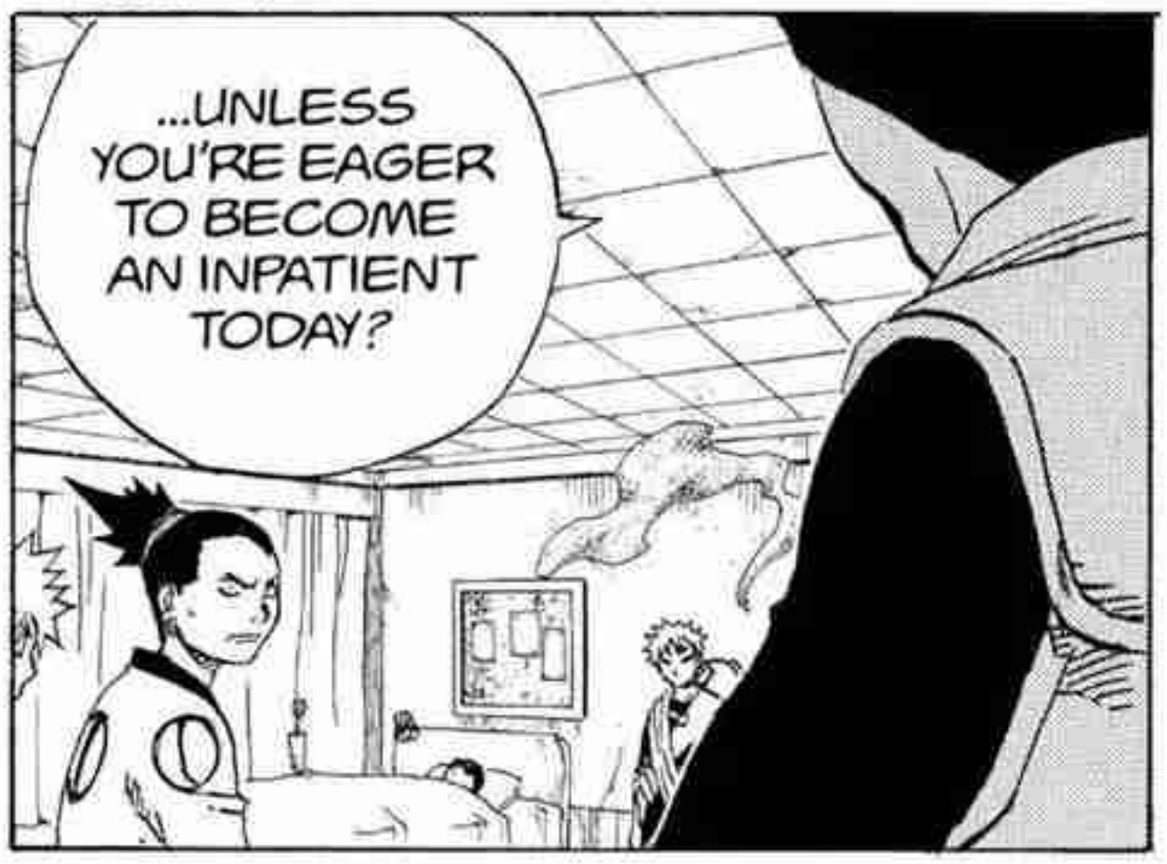
WHAT'S THE MATTER, NARUTO...?!

TREMBLE
!

SSSSSS

!!

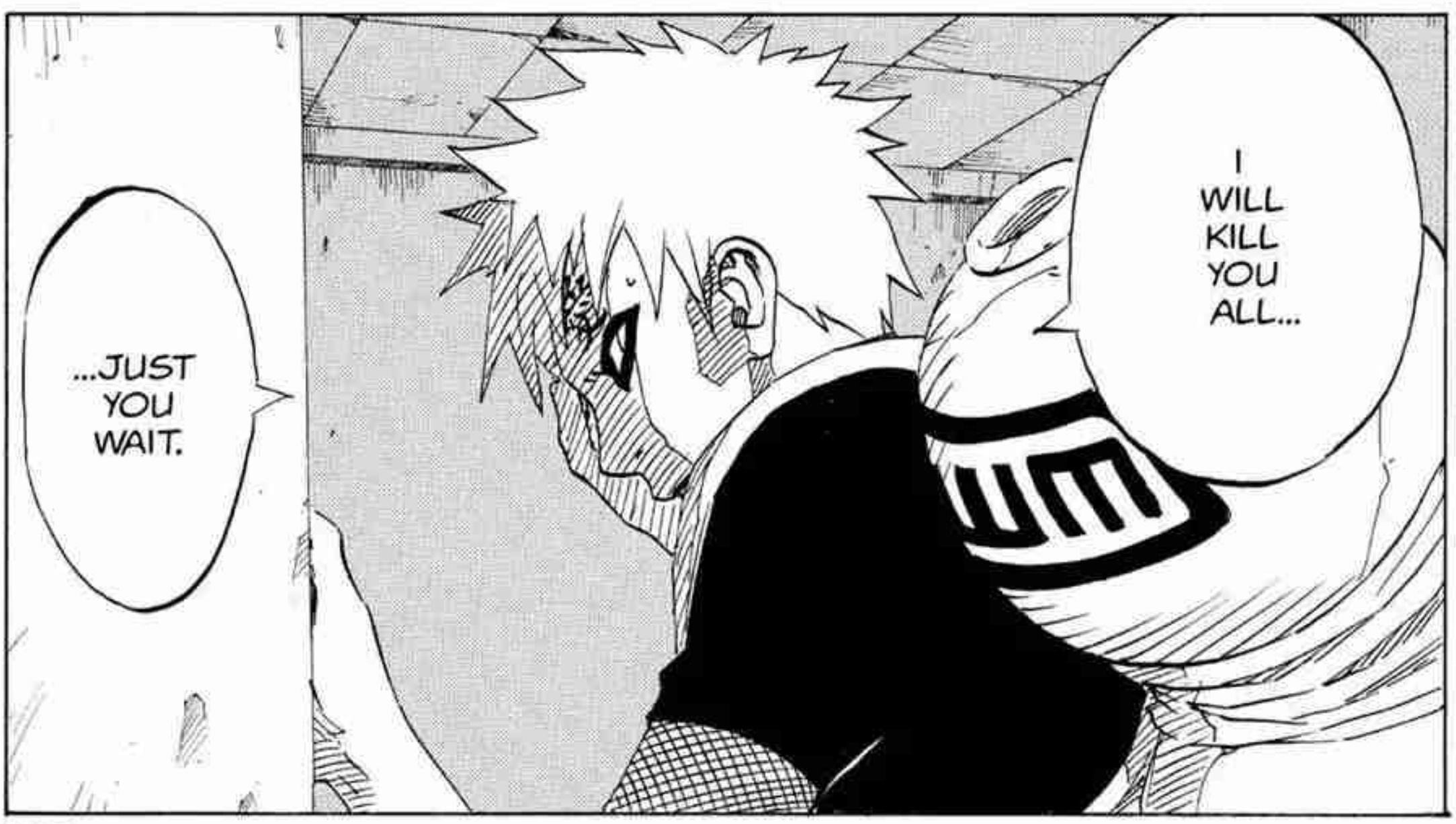
READ
THIS
WAY


...UNLESS YOU'RE EAGER TO BECOME AN INPATIENT TODAY?

UNH...!

WOBBLE
FWSH

THE FINALS START TOMORROW. DON'T BE IN SUCH A HURRY...


...JUST YOU WAIT.
I WILL KILL YOU ALL...

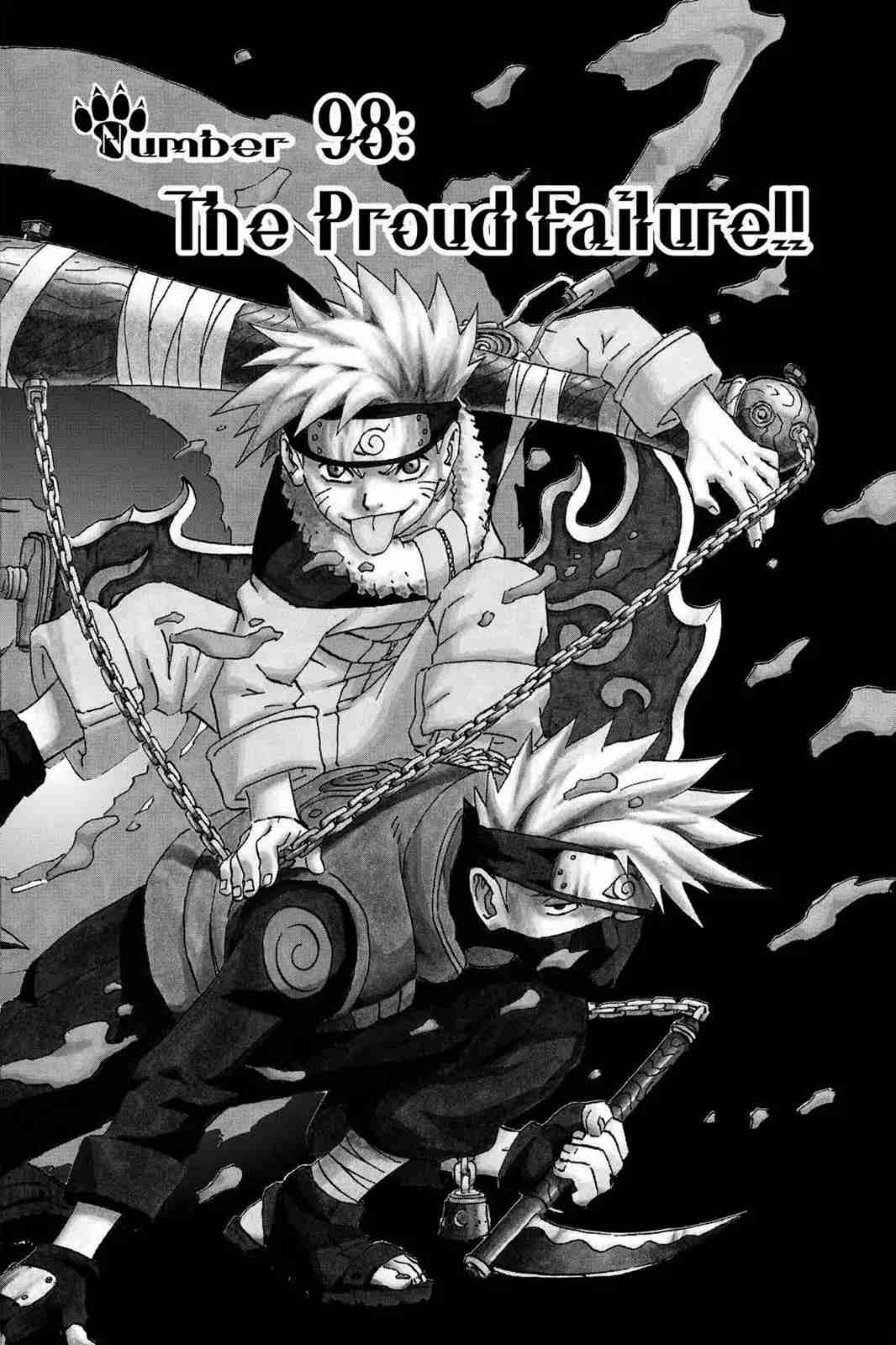
THE WORLD OF KISHIMOTO MASASHI
MY PERSONAL HISTORY, PART 15

SOMEHOW, WHEN I WAS A HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR, I FINALLY MANAGED TO DRAW A 31-PAGE MANGA, BUT I COULDN'T JUDGE WHETHER IT WAS FUNNY OR NOT, SO I ASKED MY LITTLE BROTHER TO READ IT. I WAITED, SILENTLY WILLING HIM TO FIND IT HILARIOUS, BUT WHEN HE FINALLY SPOKE, HE SAID, "THIS ISN'T FUNNY AT ALL!" I DECIDED THAT I COULDN'T TRUST HIS OPINION, SO NEXT I SHOWED IT TO OUR FATHER, BUT HIS REACTION WAS THE SAME... "IT'S NOT FUNNY!" I HAD BEEN ALL READY AND EXCITED TO SEND IN THAT FIRST 31-PAGE MANGA TO THE *SHONEN JUMP* CONTEST. BUT AFTER THOSE TEPID RESPONSES, I COMPLETELY LOST MY NERVE, AND THAT REJECT MANGA ENDED UP BURIED IN MY DESK DRAWER FOREVER.

I WAS A YOUNG, SIMPLEMINDED, BLINKERED FOOL WHO THOUGHT, "I WANT TO HURRY UP AND WIN THAT CONTEST, SO I SHOULD JUST KEEP DRAWING MANGA AND SENDING THEM IN!" I KNOW I USED TO BE A COMPLETE IDIOTIC BRAT, BUT... WELL, LOOKING BACK, THAT BRAINLESS PERSEVERANCE WAS PROBABLY A GOOD TRAIT TO DEVELOP. I REASON TO MYSELF THAT I COULDN'T HELP IT BACK THEN BECAUSE I WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF MY YOUTH.

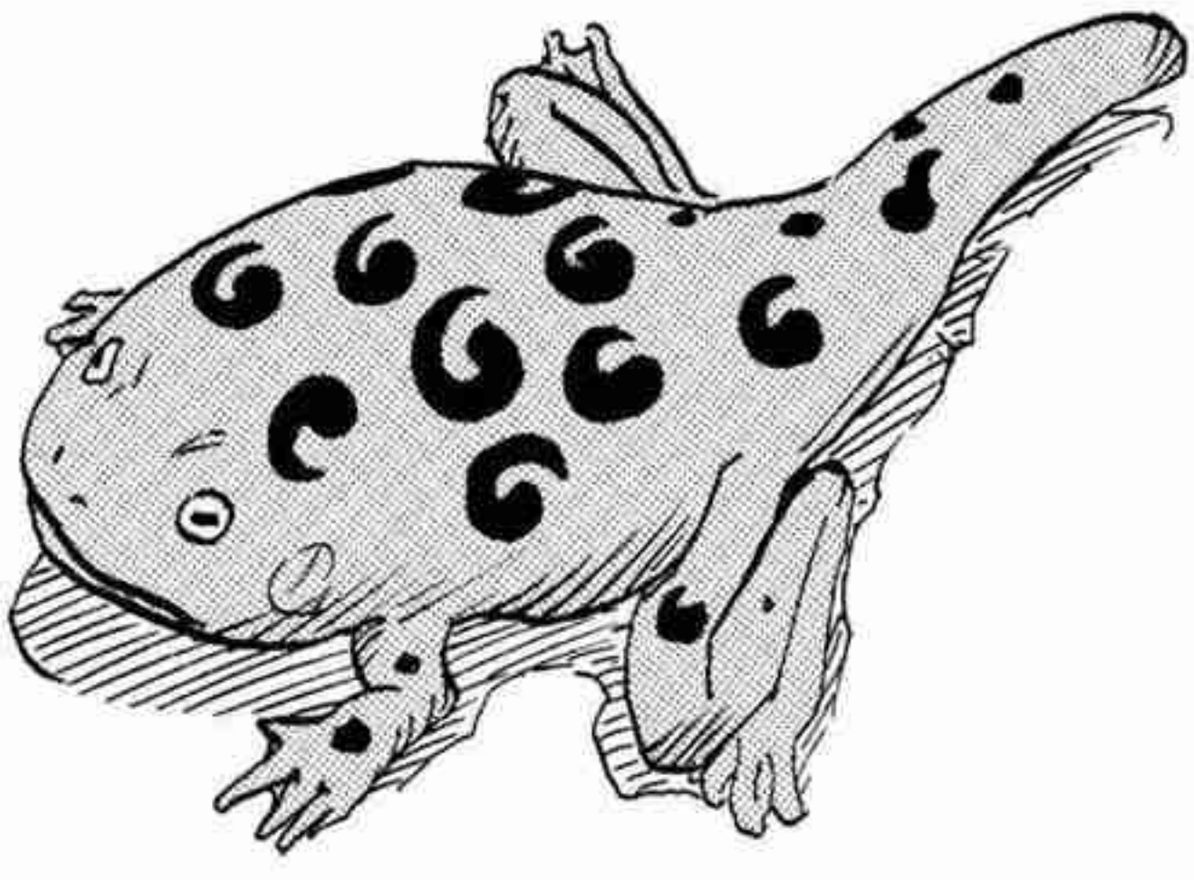
I DREW MANY OTHER MANGA, BUT I KEPT BEING TOLD THEY WERE NOT FUNNY, SO AT ONE POINT I SNAPPED AND SAID, "WHY AREN'T MY MANGA FUNNY?! DARN IT! WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT ABOUT THEM COMPARED TO OTHER MANGA ARTISTS' WORK, HUH?!" I ENDED UP GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL WITHOUT HAVING MADE ANY PROGRESS ON THE MANGA FRONT. BUT BECAUSE I HAD BEEN SPENDING ALL MY TIME ATTEMPTING TO DRAW MANGA, MY GRADES WERE 38TH OUT OF 39 IN MY CLASS. EVEN WITH REVIEW COURSES, IT BECAME CLEAR I WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED TO ANY COLLEGE. SO I STANK AT CREATING MANGA, I STANK AT SCHOOL, AND OF COURSE MY ROMANTIC LIFE STANK, SO IT WAS A TRIPLE WHAMMY OF HIGH SCHOOL BLUES. BUT I GUESS THAT HIGH SCHOOL IS A ROUGH PERIOD FOR EVERYONE. IT'S A TIME WHEN YOU'RE BESET ON ALL SIDES BY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES (THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE CURRENTLY STUDENTS WILL UNDERSTAND). FATE WASN'T BEING VERY KIND (WELL, THAT'S USUALLY THE CASE). HOWEVER, I WAS UNDAUNTED... OR RATHER, I WASN'T THE TYPE TO THINK TOO DEEPLY ABOUT SUCH THINGS... I JUST KEPT THINKING, "WELL! I'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW." AHH, I FEEL SO LUCKY THAT I WAS DUMB!

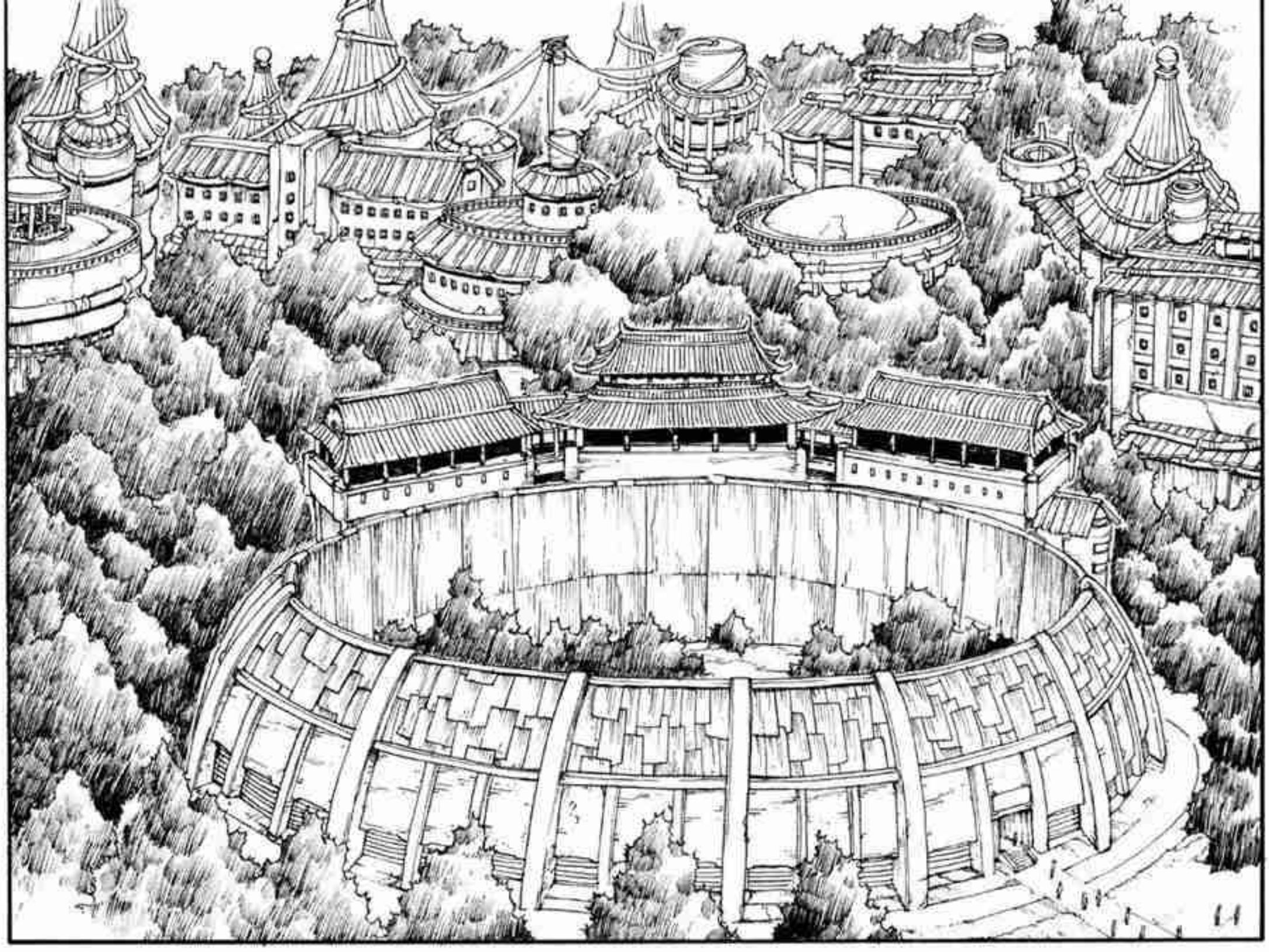
Number 98: The Proud Failure!!



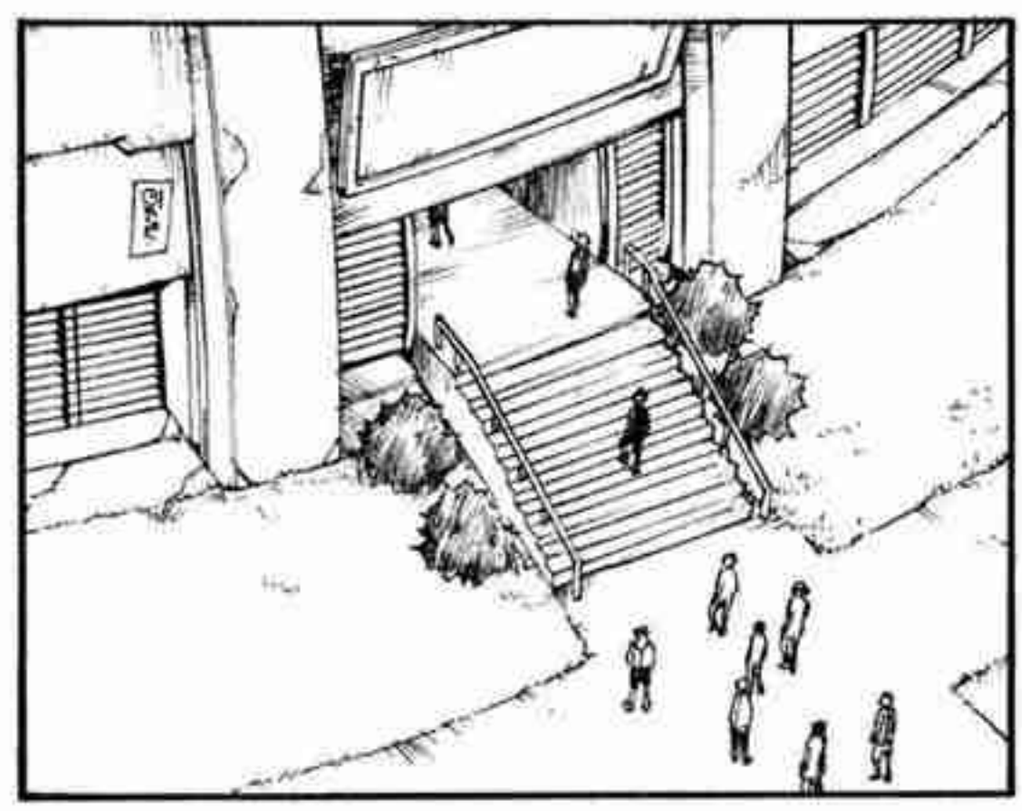
Number 98: The Proud Failure!!

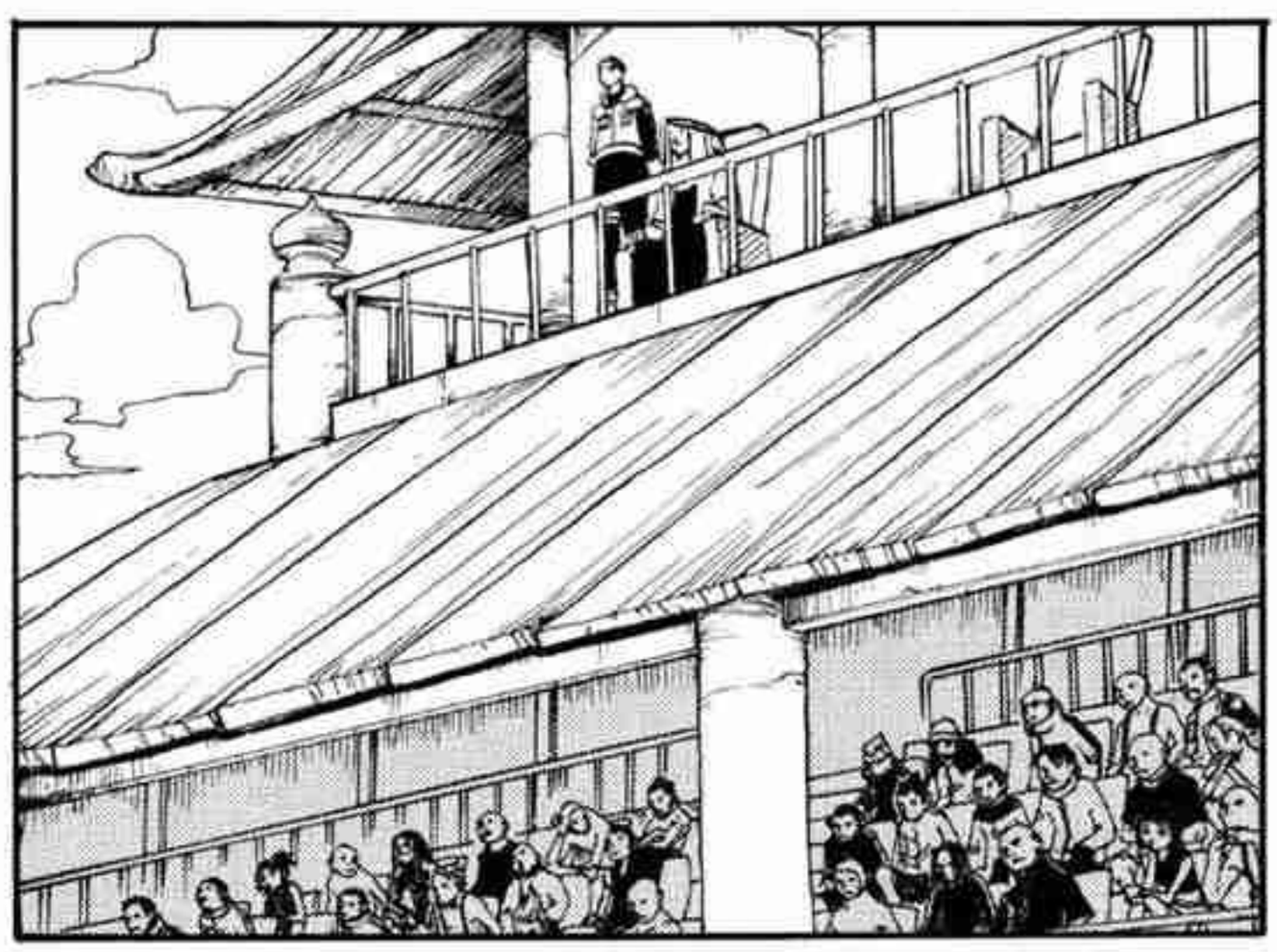
NARUTO

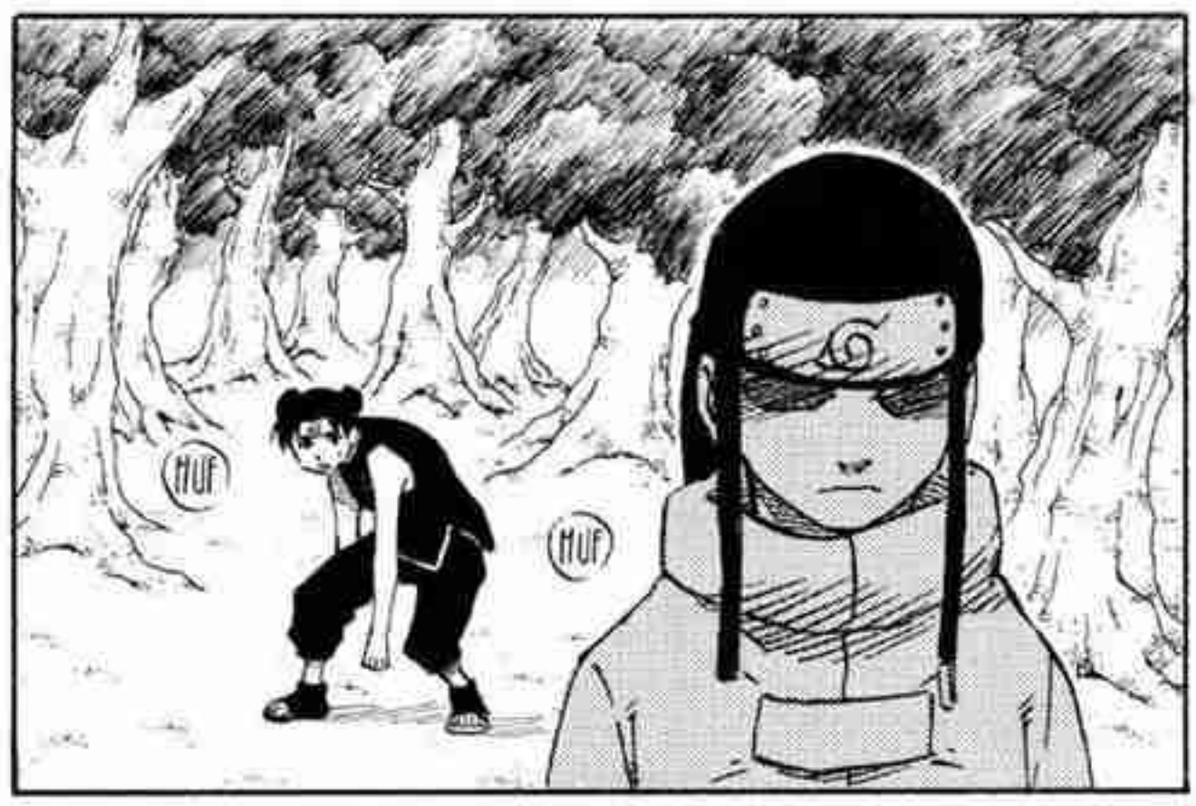


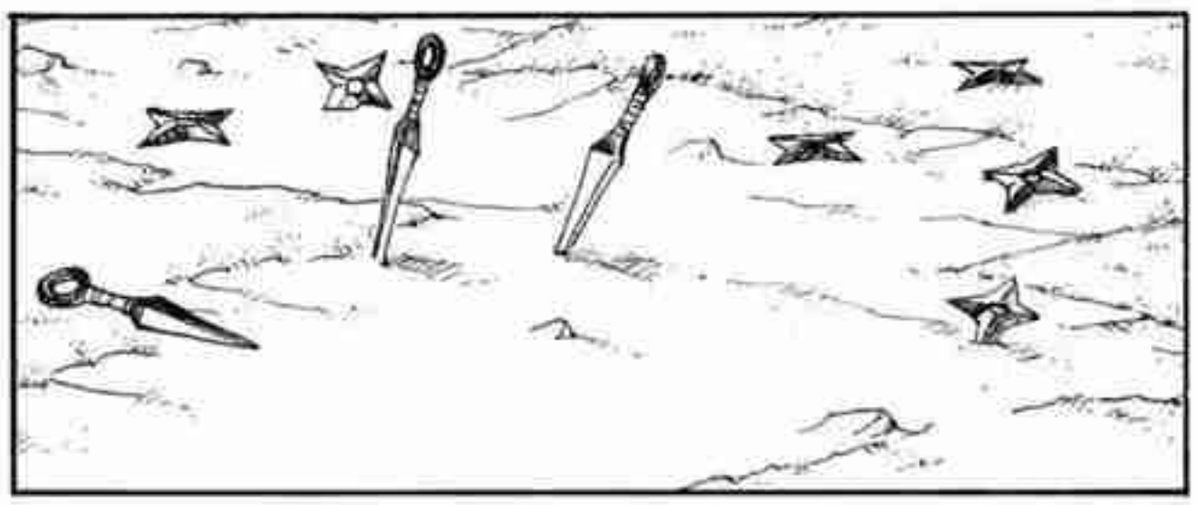


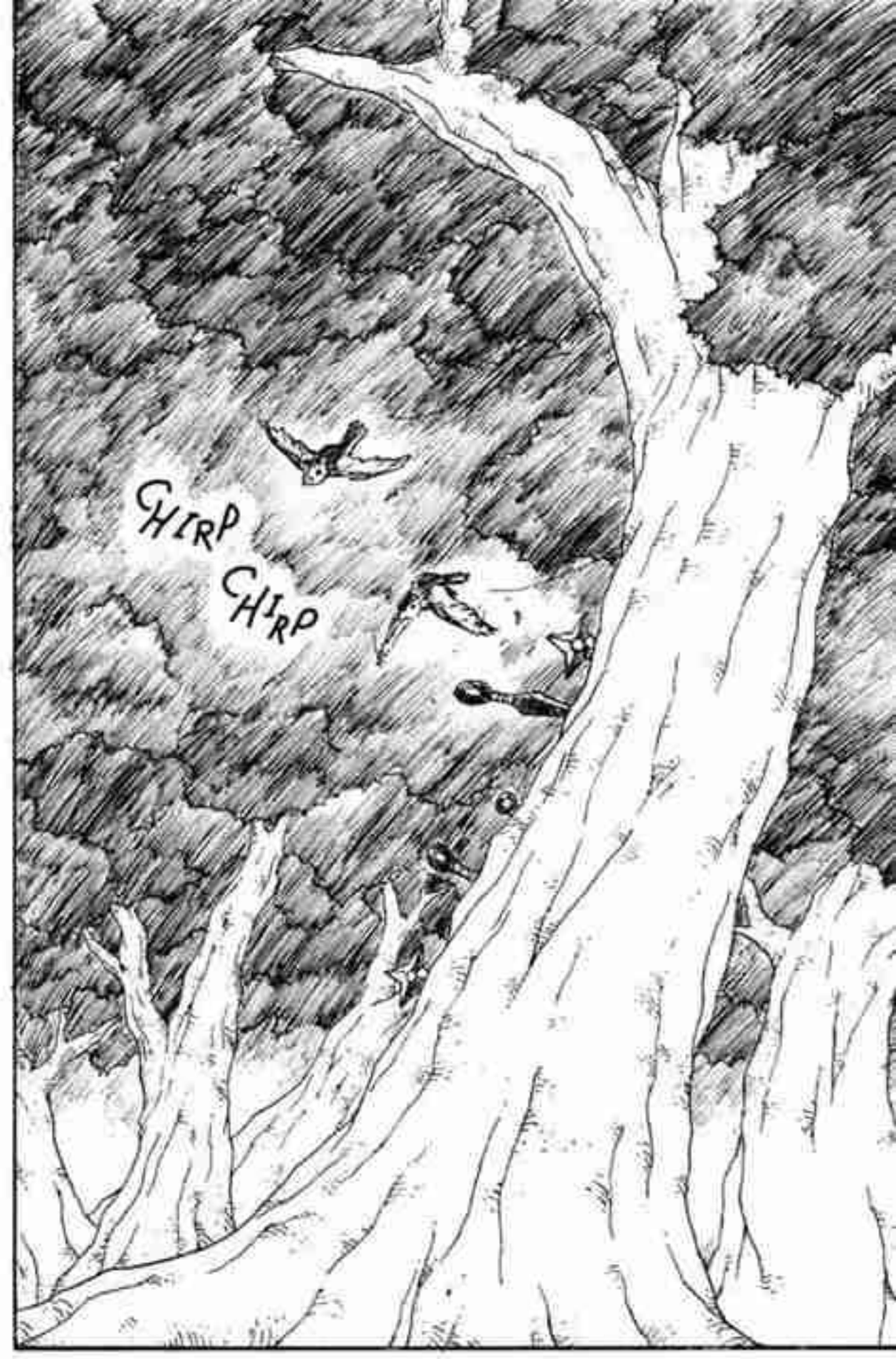
BUZZZ
BUZZZ

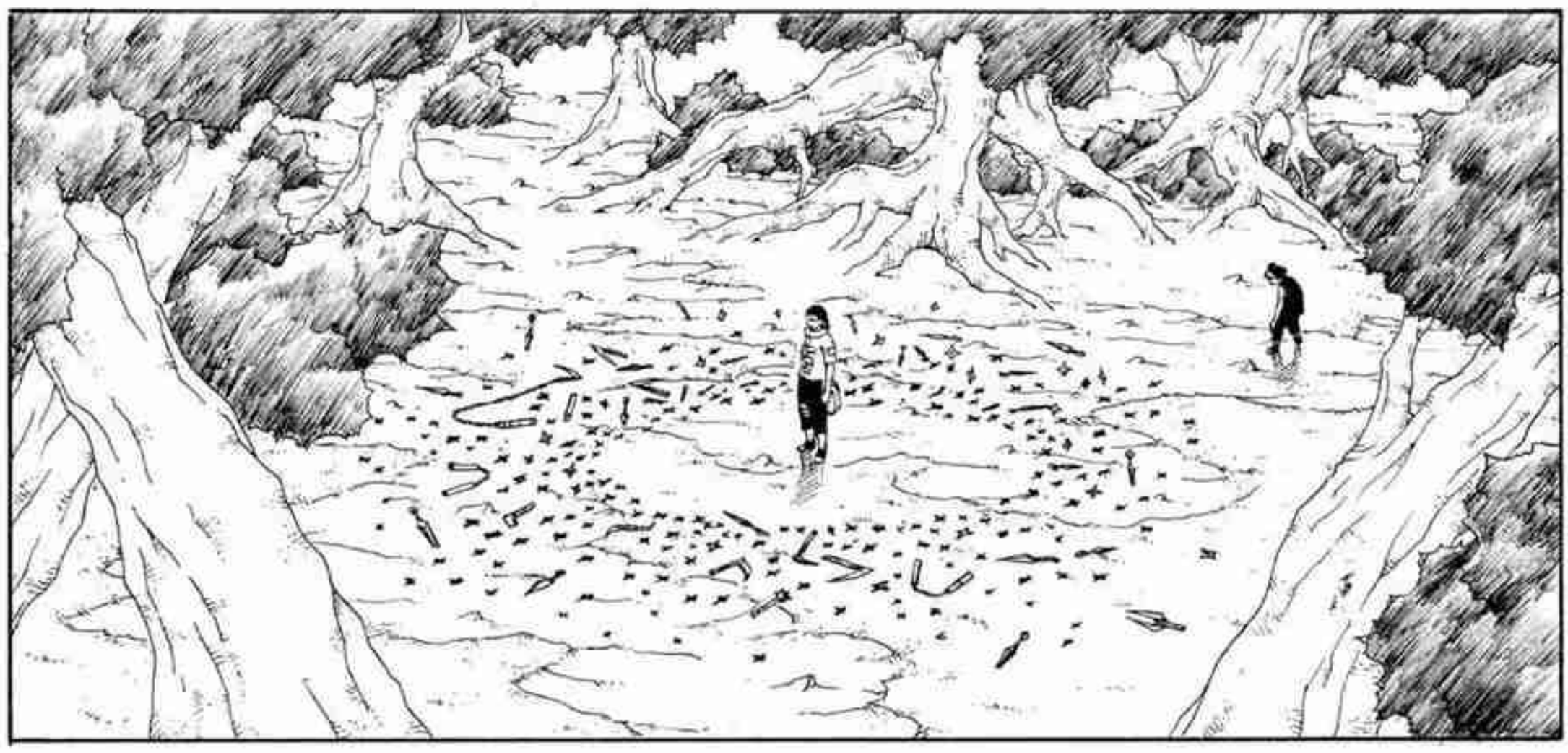





HUF
HUF



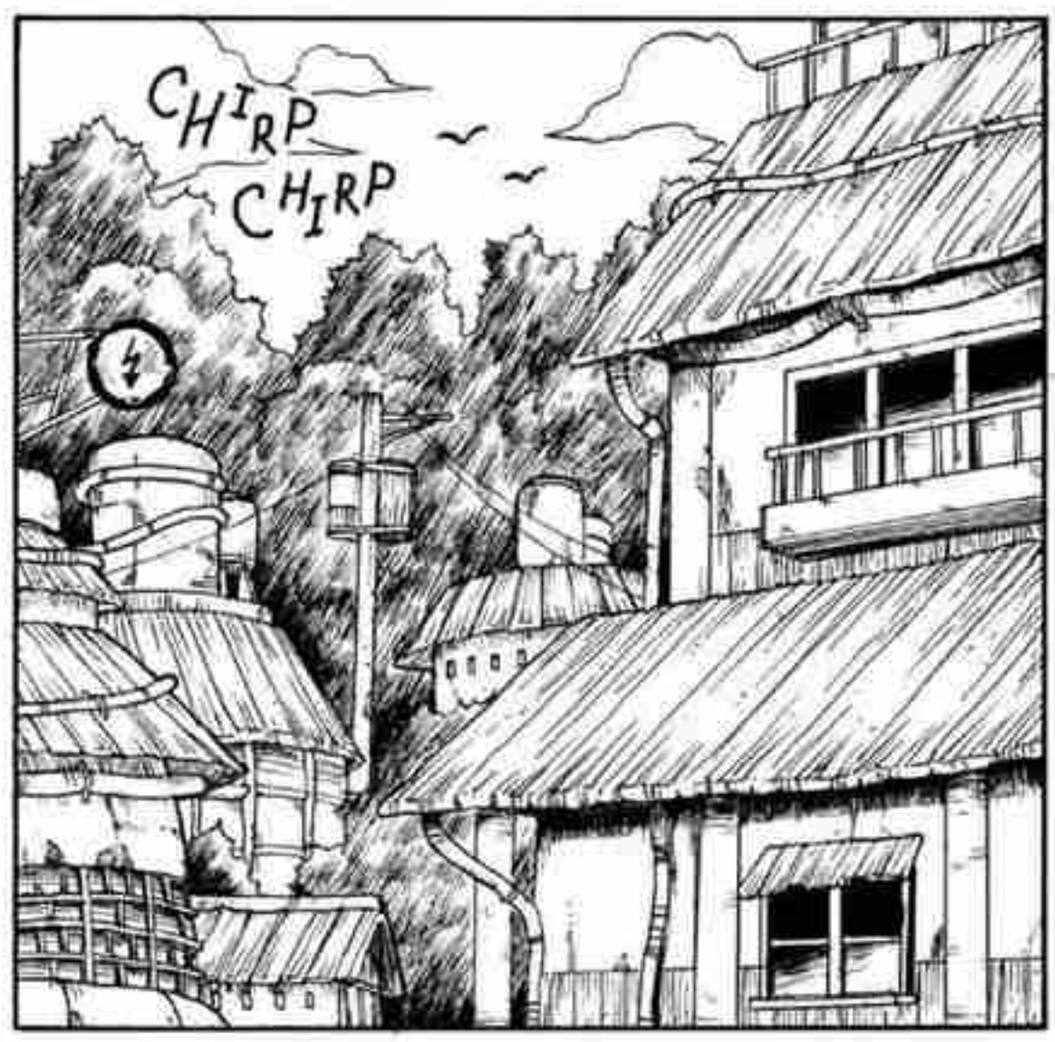

CHIRP
CHIRP



...WE BETTER GET GOING.
LET'S CALL IT A WARM-UP...

HUF
HUF
IT'S PERFECT, NEJI...
NOT A SINGLE SCRATCH ON YOU...

人生
I WAS SO NERVOUS... I HARDLY SLEPT...
IT'S TIME, AT LAST...


CHIRP
CHIRP

...

SO... I'M UP AGAINST HIM IN THE FIRST ROUND...

...THAT THE STRONGEST GENIN IN KONOHA IS A MEMBER OF MY OWN TEAM...
I WAS REFERRING TO...
...I'VE MENTIONED IT BEFORE, I'M SURE...

THESE TENKETSU...
THEY'RE UNDETECT-ABLE, EVEN TO MY SHARINGAN EYE.

...HYUGA NEJI...!

SKF

I CAN MAKE A FROG NOW... SO I'LL BE ALL RIGHT...
HA HA HA HA!
HA HA!

SHF SHF
...

ALL OF THESE GUYS...
...THEY HAVE REAL NASTY LOOKS ABOUT THEM...

愛
...

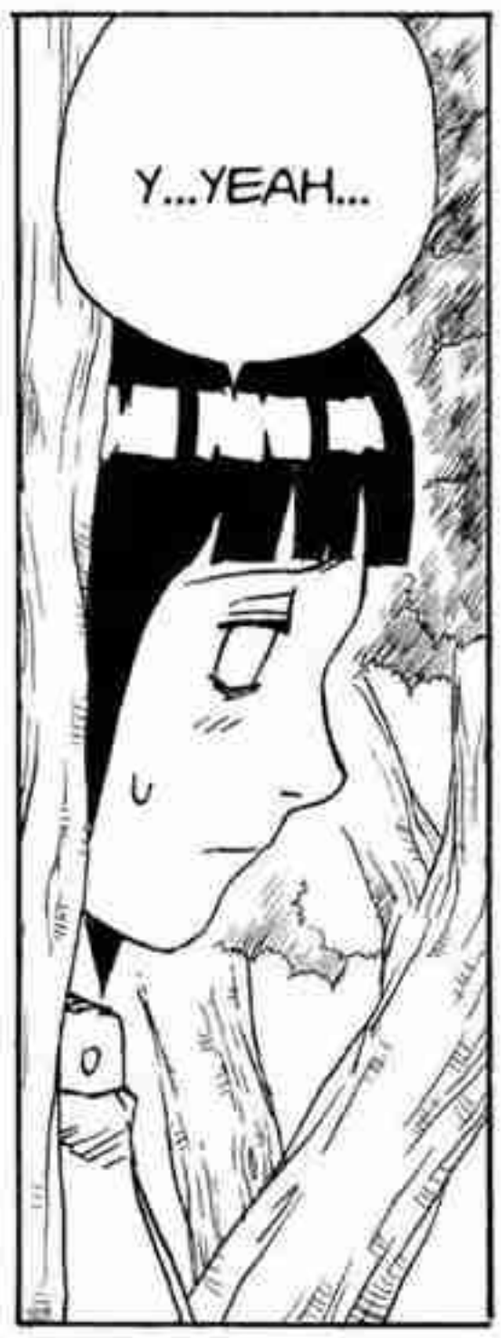
HA...
...

READ THIS WAY
!
!!
TWITCH
HUH?!
HEY, HINATA... YOU... YOU'RE ALL BETTER NOW?
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
WH... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
AREN'T THE FINALS TODAY?
?
N...N... NARUTO!
SWUP

I JUST... FELT LIKE COMING BY HERE, THAT'S ALL.

THIS IS WHERE I BECAME A GENIN...!

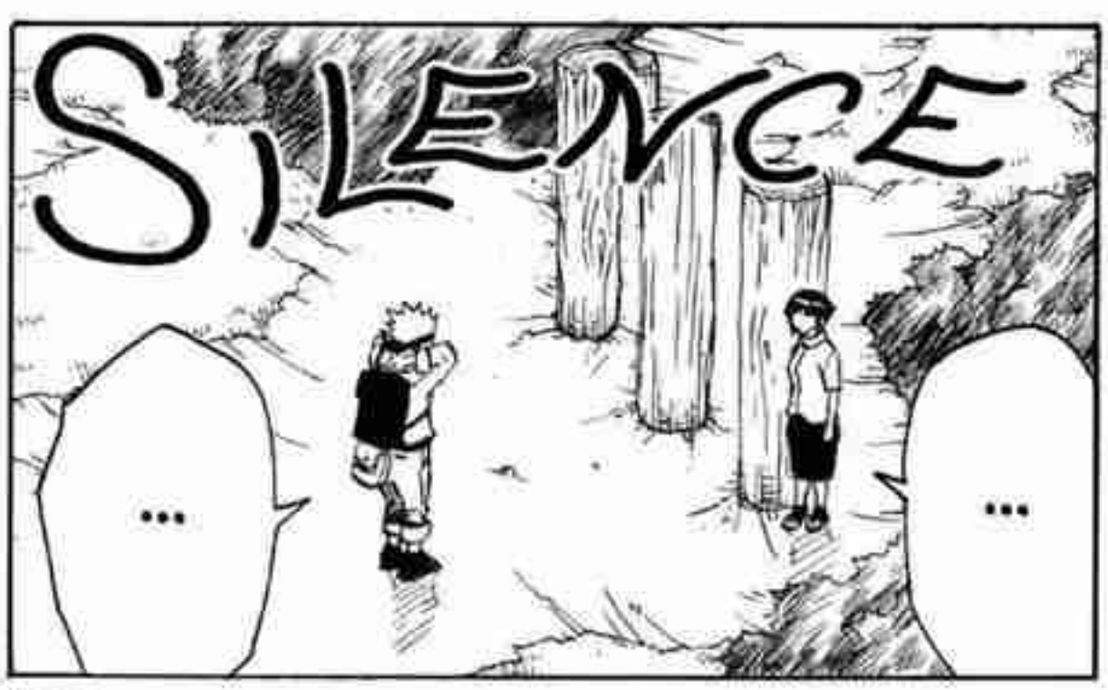
...


Y...YEAH...

...

...HE REALLY IS STRONG, ISN'T HE...?

HA HA! SURE! 'CAUSE I'M STRONG TOO!
'CAUSE...
B...BUT I REALLY THINK... OF ALL PEOPLE, YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO WIN AGAINST HIM, NARUTO!


SILENCE
...
...

HA HA...
...

FROM THE OUTSIDE, I MIGHT NOT SEEM ANY DIFFERENT, BUT...
...I...I... FEEL LIKE I'VE CHANGED...

Y...YOU KNOW, I... WHEN YOU CHEERED ME ON, NARUTO...
...I FELT LIKE SOMEHOW I BECAME STRONGER THAN BEFORE...
AND WHEN THE PRELIMI-NARIES WERE OVER, I STARTED TO LIKE MYSELF JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE.

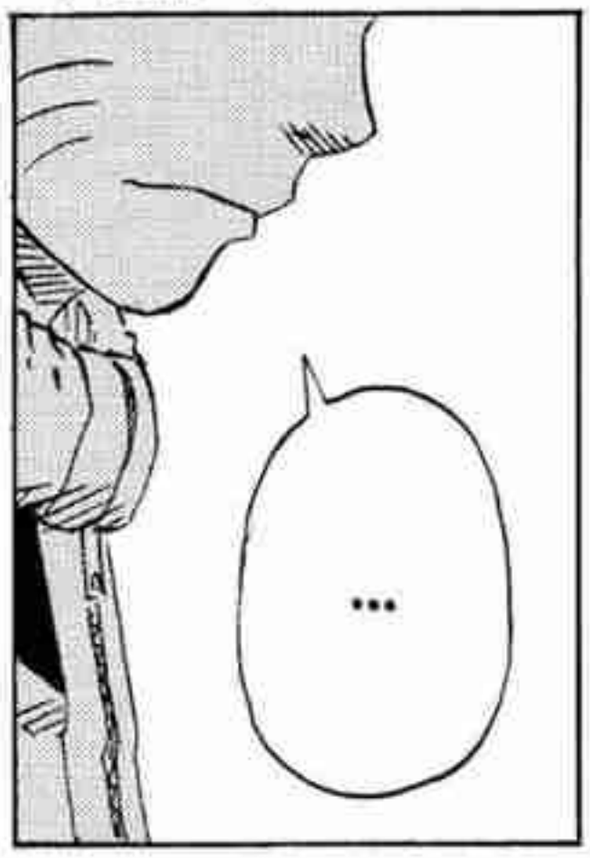
BECAUSE... THAT'S MY SHINOBI WAY, TOO...!
...I N-NEVER... GO BACK ON MY WORD...

HEH HEH HEH...
WOW! BECAUSE OF ME?
I GUESS I AM AN AWESOME INFLUENCE!

N-NARUTO... IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU...
A-AT LEAST... THAT'S WHAT I THINK...

!
...HEY... HINATA...

...


...

HUH?

...IS THAT REALLY HOW YOU FEEL?

...'CAUSE I'M EMBARRASSED ABOUT HOW I SCREW UP ALL THE TIME.
AND EVEN IF YOU DO MESS UP...
THAT'S NOT TRUE...
...I MIGHT SEEM REALLY STRONG, BUT... I'M USUALLY JUST TRYING TO ACT TOUGH...

Y... YOU'RE REALLY INSPIRING TO WATCH...
!

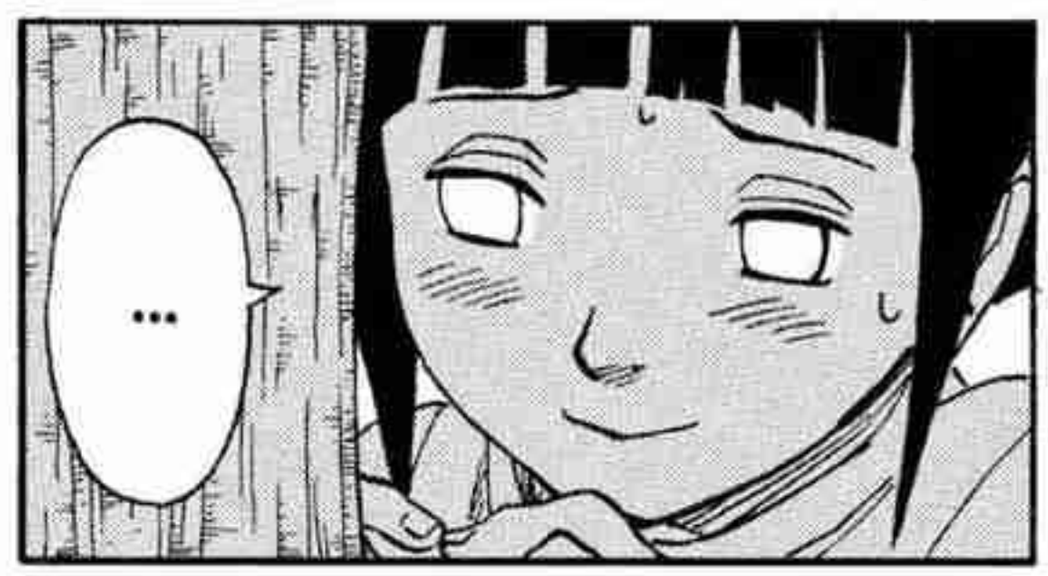
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT PERFECT...
AND...

YOU'RE A PROUD FAILURE...!
I-IF YOU ASK ME...

BECAUSE YOU MAKE MISTAKES... BUT YOU STILL HAVE THE GUTS TO GET BACK UP AND KEEP FIGHTING...

THAT'S WHAT I CONSIDER TRUE STRENGTH...

I...I BELIEVE YOU'RE AN INCREDIBLY STRONG PERSON, NARUTO...



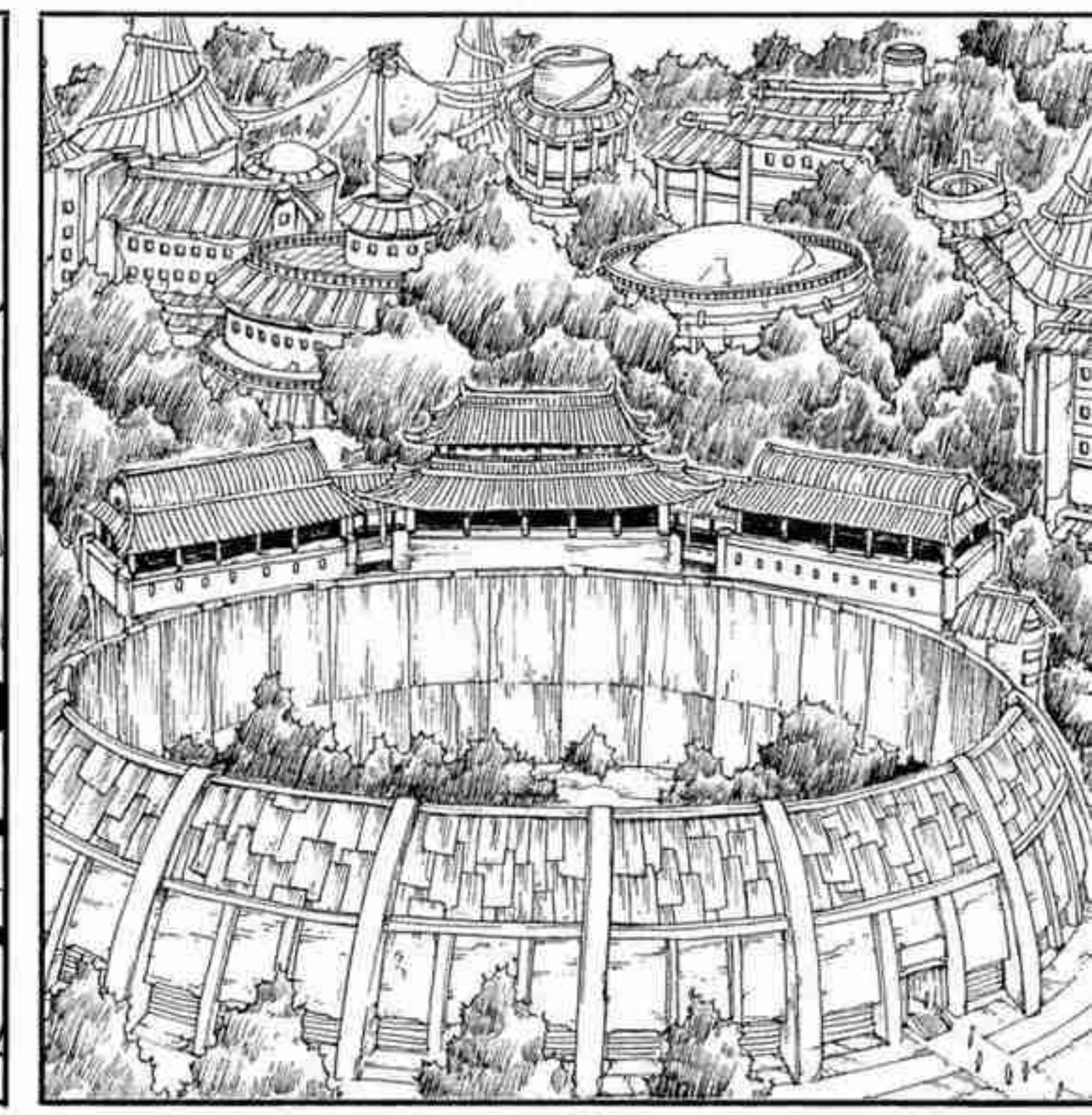
BUT ACTUALLY...
I THINK I KINDA LIKE FOLKS LIKE YOU!

YOU SHOULD COME WATCH ME BLOW NEJI AWAY!
LATER!
GRIN
WELL, I'M GONNA HEAD OVER TO THE EXAM!

SHINO'S MATCH DOESN'T START 'TIL LATER, SO WE SHOULD STILL BE OKAY...
HEY, HINATA! SORRY I'M LATE...

...

DAZED
WHAT IS IT?
HUH?



ROAR

...FOR ALL OF YOU ARE THE STARS OF THESE FINALS!

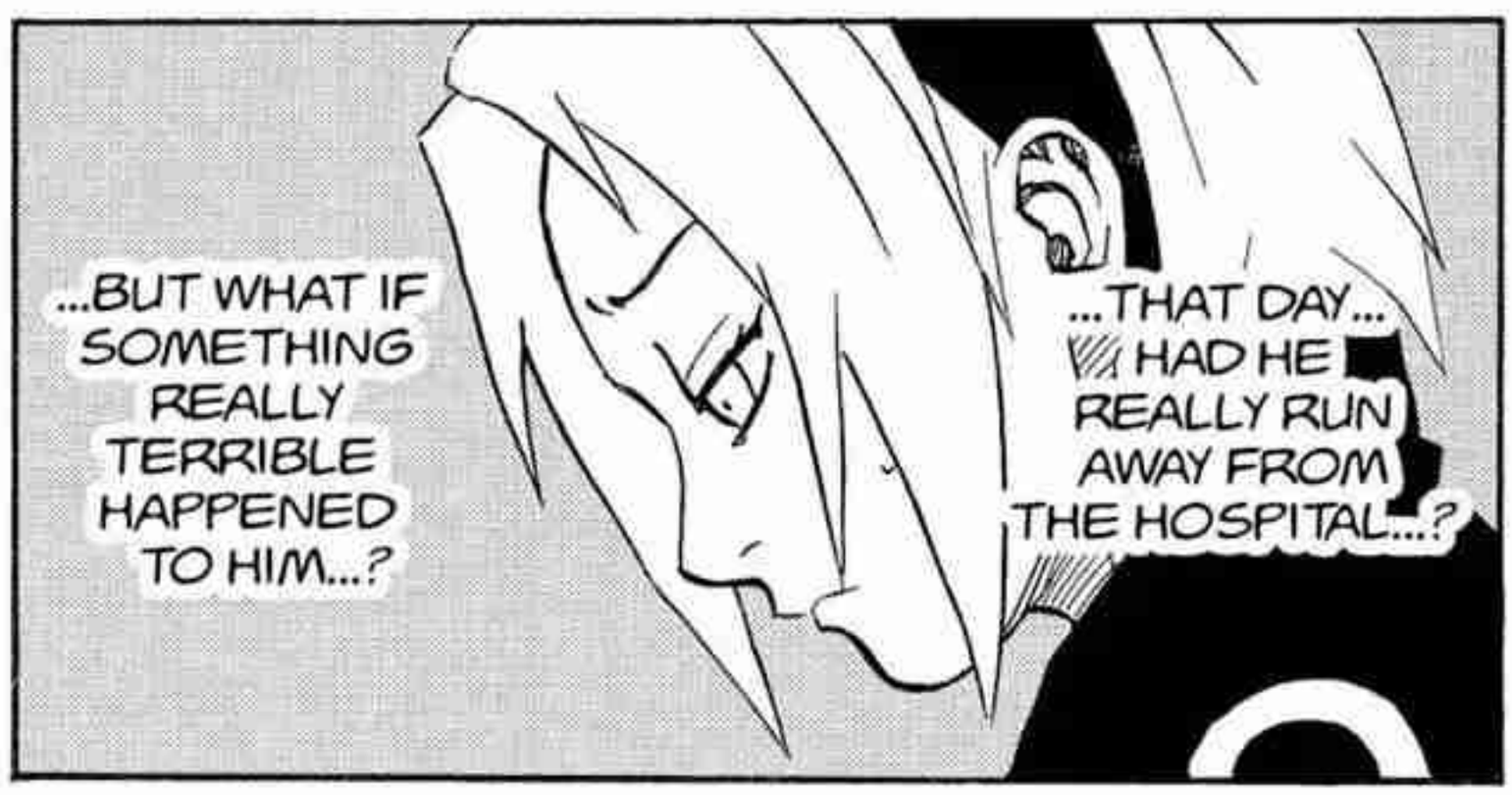
READ THIS WAY
!
HEY! STOP FIDGETING!
STAND STILL AND FACE FORWARD, TOWARD THE GUESTS...
WHERE THE HECK IS SASUKE?!
GLANCE
GLANCE
THAT DOSU GUY I'M SUPPOSED TO FIGHT ISN'T HERE EITHER...
HUH?
GLANCE
GLANCE
ROAR

愛D

Number 99:
The Finals Commence...!!

...I WONDER...
...IS HE STILL RECOVERING?

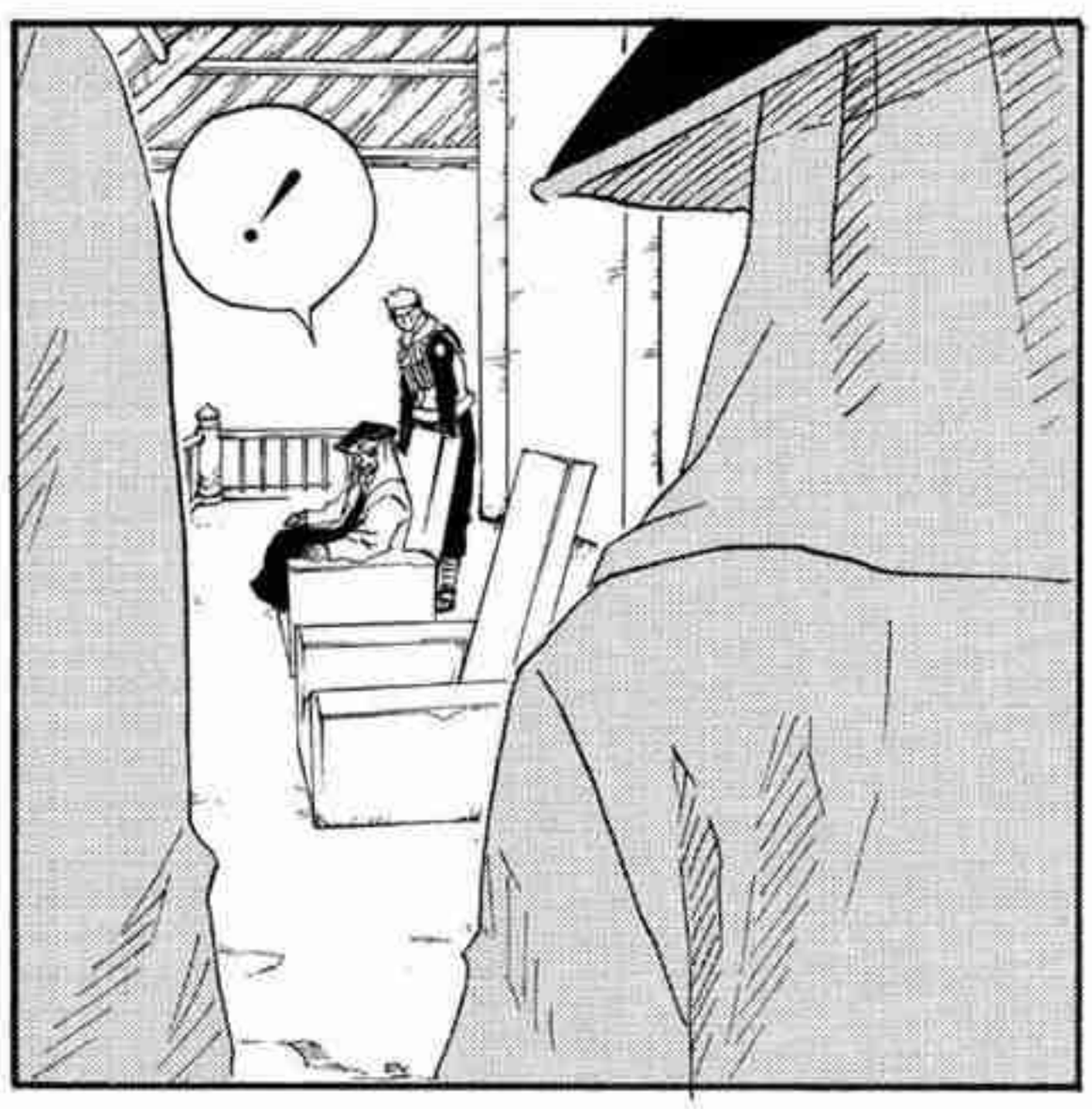
I THINK I REMEMBER... SASUKE'S OPPONENT IS...
...


...BUT WHAT IF SOMETHING REALLY TERRIBLE HAPPENED TO HIM...?
...THAT DAY... HAD HE REALLY RUN AWAY FROM THE HOSPITAL...?

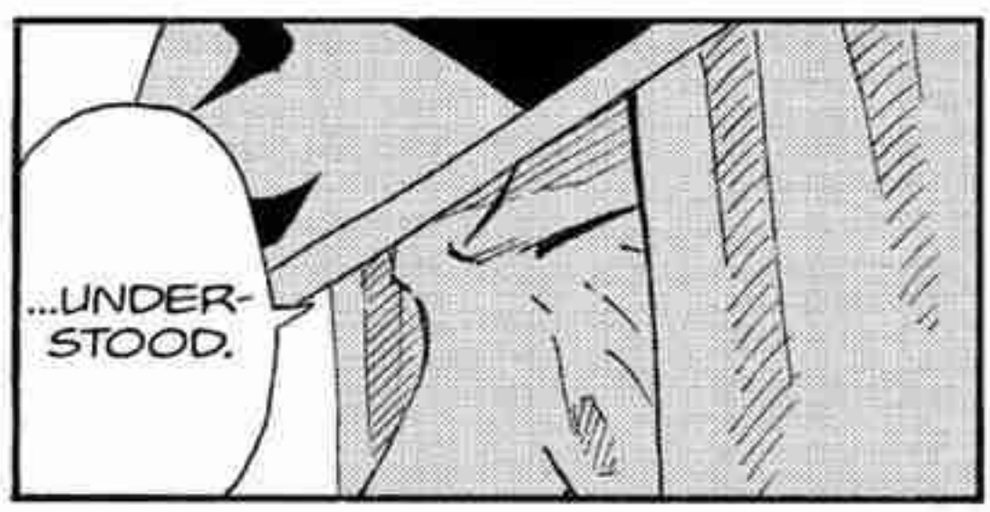
...

IF THAT'S THE CASE, WE MIGHT NEVER FIND HIM...
HE MAY ALREADY BE IN OROCHIMARU'S CLUTCHES...

SASUKE IS STILL NOWHERE TO BE FOUND?
WE STILL HAVE SEVERAL BLACK OPS TEAMS OUT SEARCHING FOR HIM, BUT... THERE'S NO TRACE...


!

...


...UNDER-STOOD.

WELL, WELL...
AH...

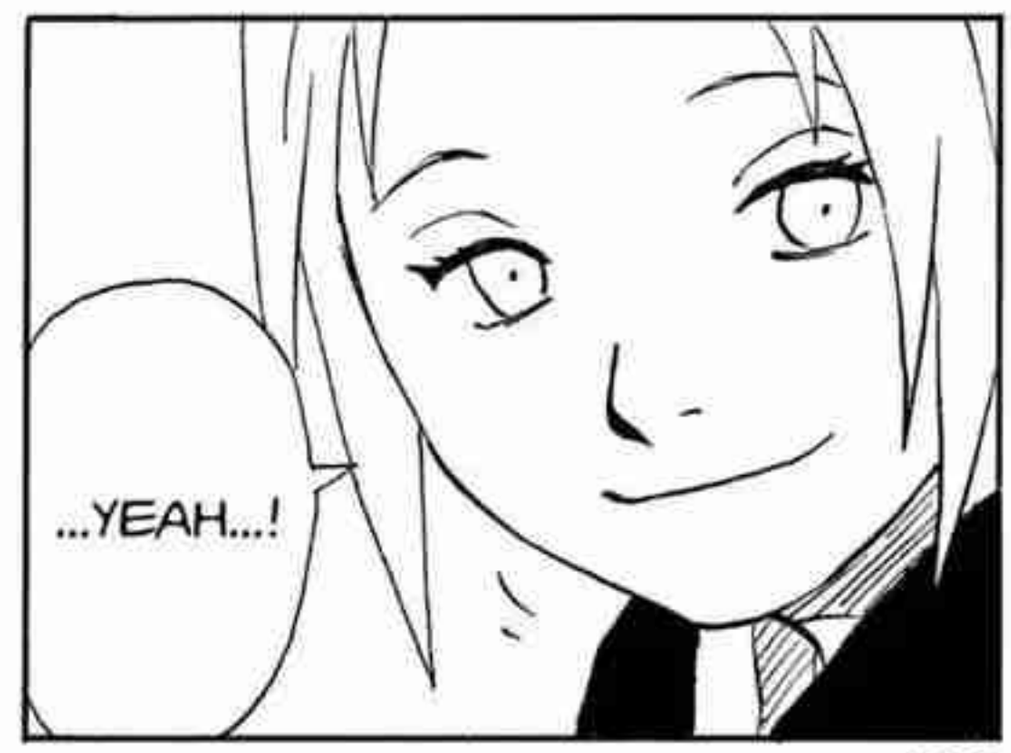
...
...

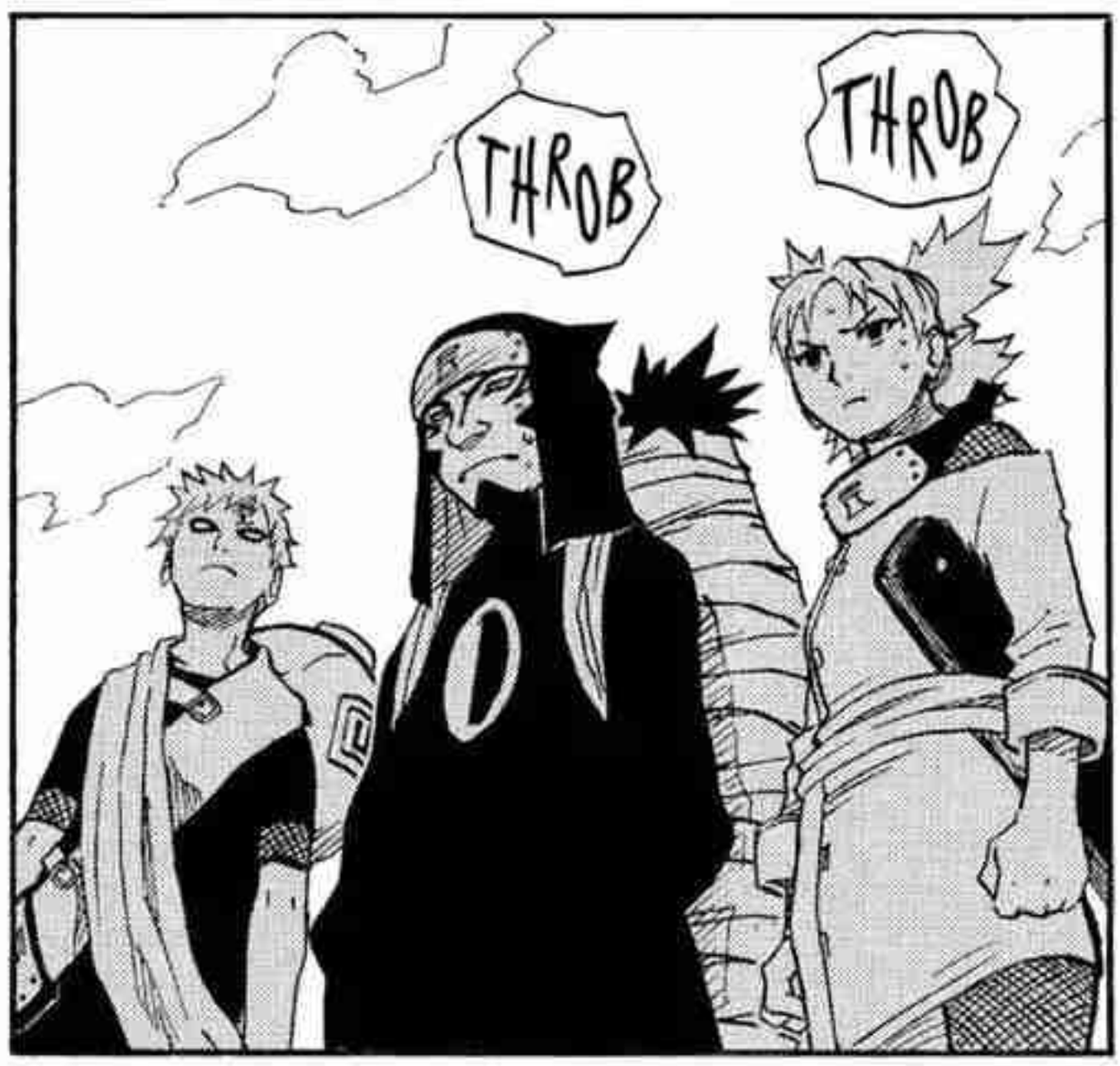
I KNOW YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SASUKE, BUT...
...AND CHEER HIM ON?
EITHER WAY, NARUTO'S MATCH IS FIRST, SO WHY DON'T YOU STOP FRETTING...

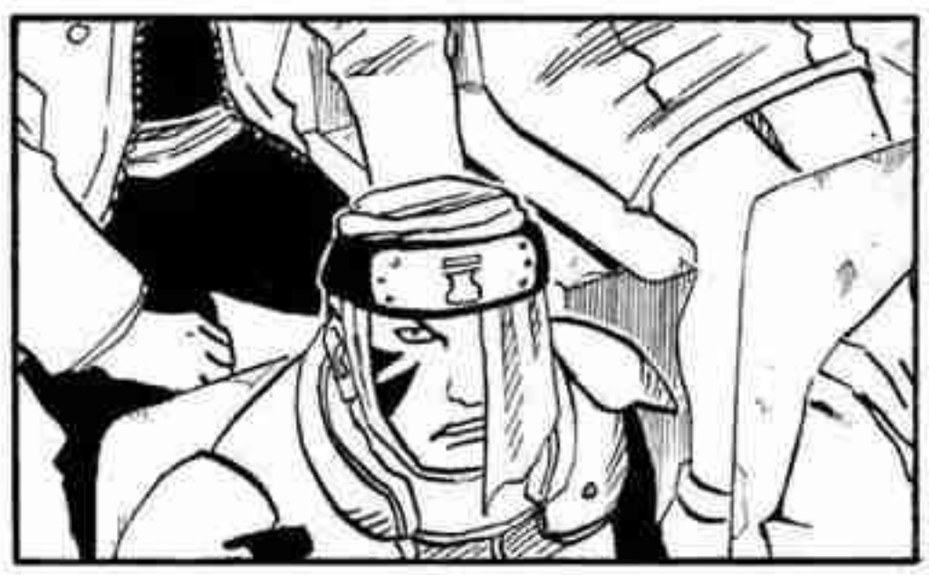
...

風
LORD KAZEKAGE!

SHF


...YEAH...!


THROB
THROB

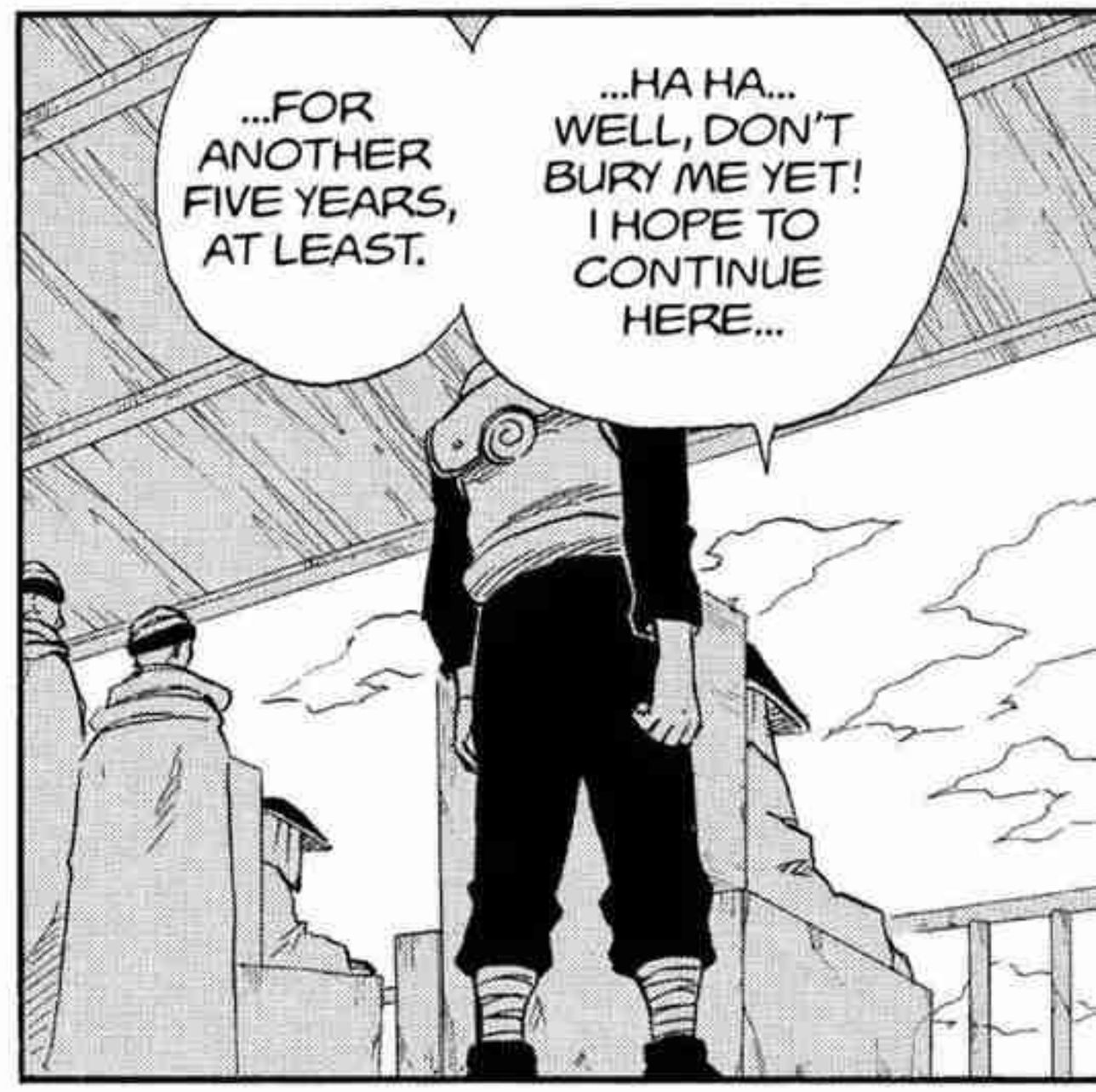


GULP

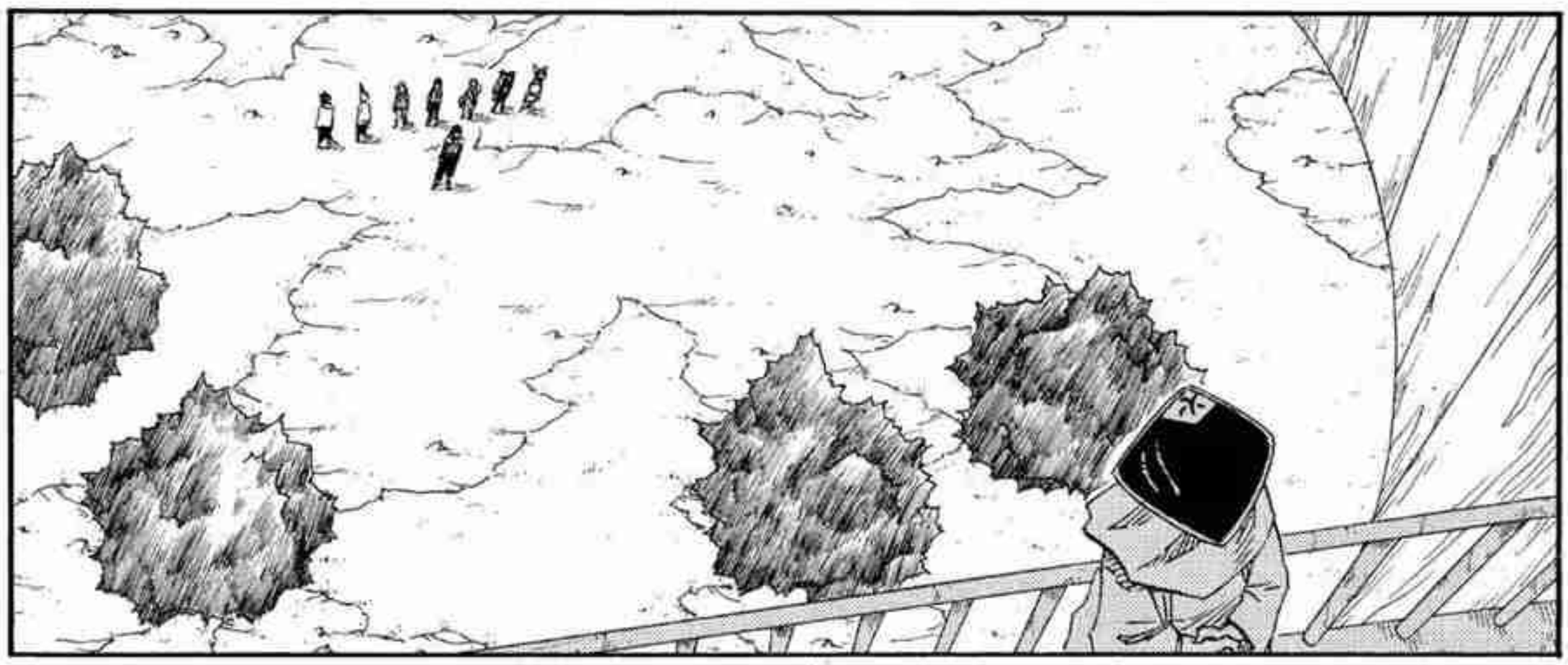
PERHAPS YOU OUGHT TO CHOOSE YOUR SUCCESSOR SOON...
OH NO... I'M HAPPY TO MAKE THE TRIP.
OF COURSE, YOU'RE STILL HALE AND HEARTY... BUT THE VOYAGE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A BIT HARDER ON YOU, LORD HOKAGE.

YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM YOUR LONG JOURNEY.

...


...FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS, AT LEAST.
...HA HA... WELL, DON'T BURY ME YET! I HOPE TO CONTINUE HERE...

SHF
WE OUGHT TO BEGIN...
WELL THEN...



...FOR THE CHÛNIN SELECTION EXAMINATION!!
AHEM, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ESTEEMED GUESTS... WELCOME AND HEARTFELT THANKS FOR GATHERING HERE IN KONOHAGAKURE...

...BETWEEN THE EIGHT CANDIDATES WHO ADVANCED IN THE PRELIMINARIES.

WE WILL NOW BEGIN THE MATCHES OF THE FINAL ROUND...

IT SEEMS YOU ARE MISSING ONE...

...EIGHT CANDI-DATES...?

...

...AND ENJOY!

PLEASE SIT BACK...

FWIP

NARA SHIKAMARU
TEMARI
ABURAME SHINO
KANKURO
UCHIHA SASUKE
GAARA
HYUGA NEJI
UZUMAKI NARUTO

BEFORE WE BEGIN, I HAVE A FEW ANNOUNCE-MENTS...

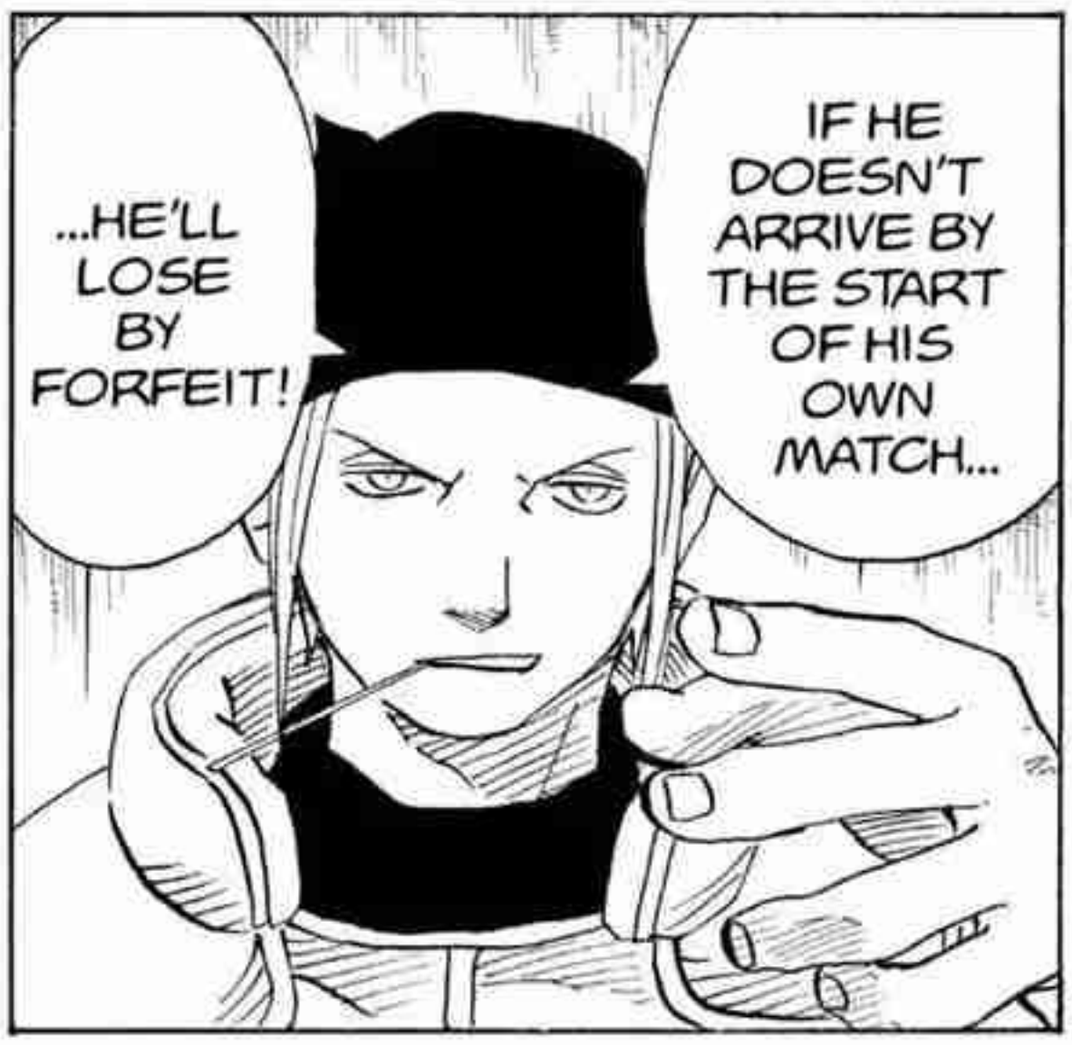
LOOK HERE!

...DID THAT DOSU GUY WITH-DRAW?!
I WAS DOWN FOR AN EXTRA MATCH, BUT...

LOOK AGAIN AND CONFIRM YOUR ASSIGNED OPPONENT.
THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW LAST-MINUTE CHANGES.

WHAT?!

HEY! HEY!!

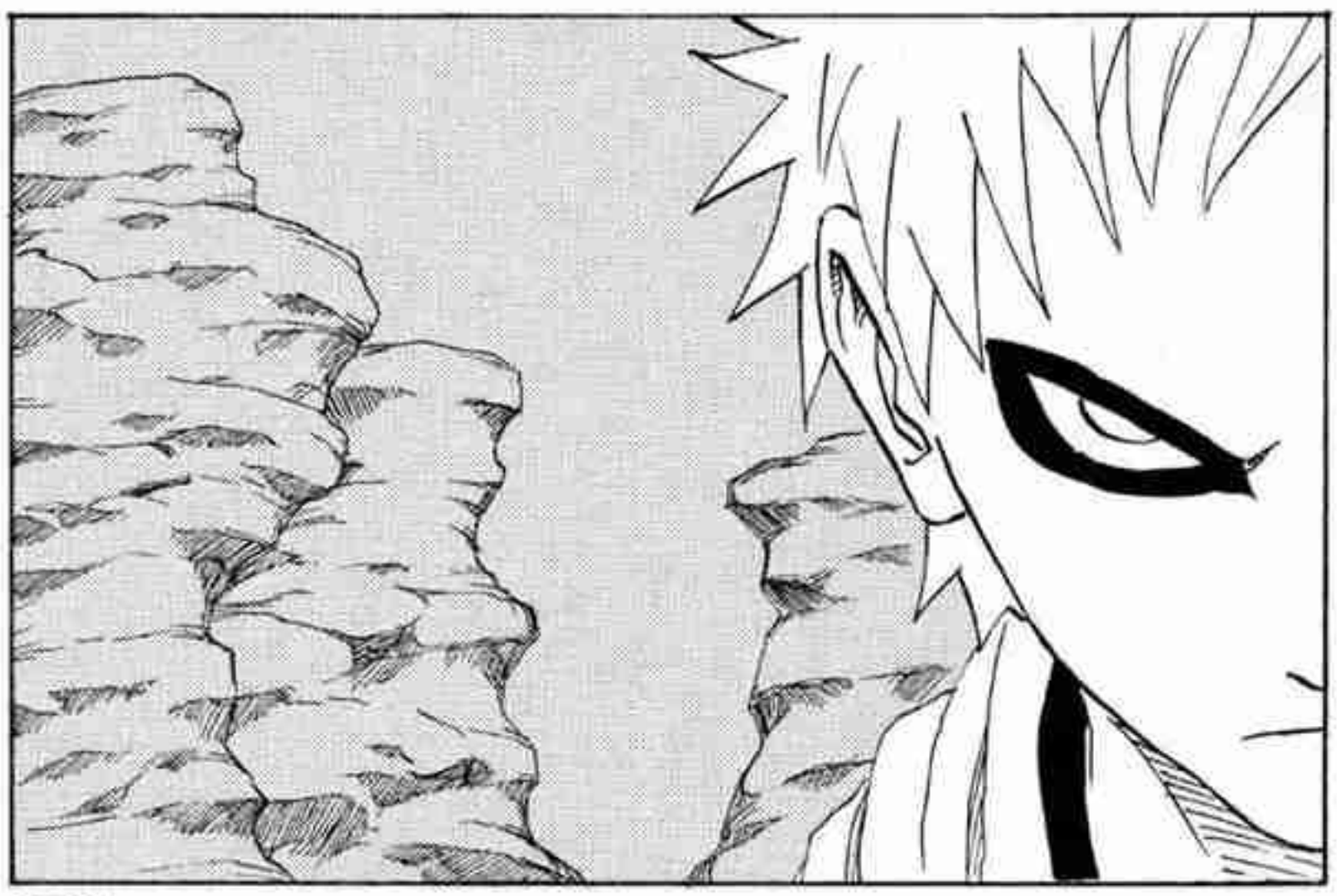

...HE'LL LOSE BY FORFEIT!
IF HE DOESN'T ARRIVE BY THE START OF HIS OWN MATCH...

SASUKE'S NOT HERE YET, SO WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN?

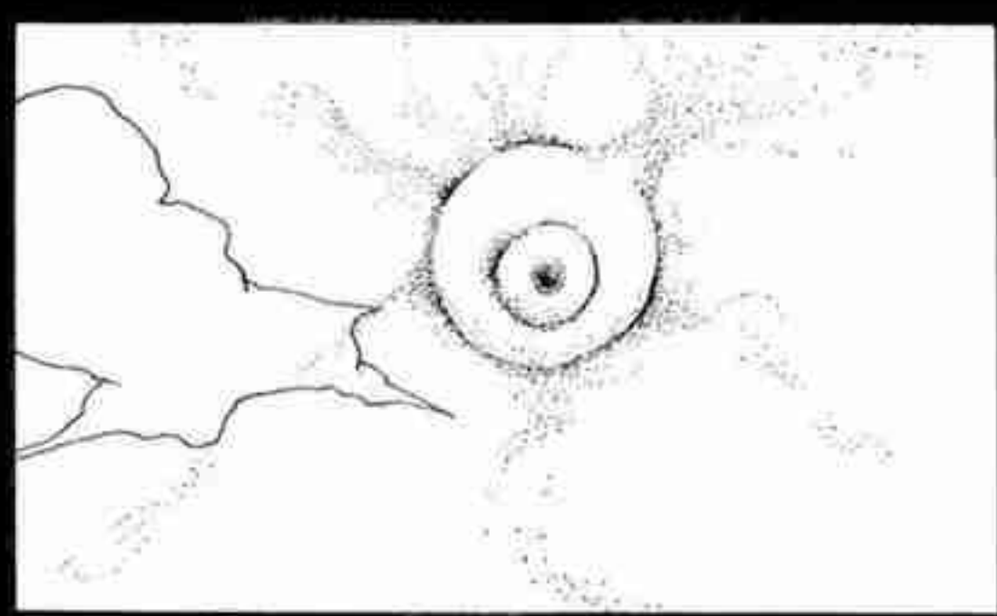
愛
...

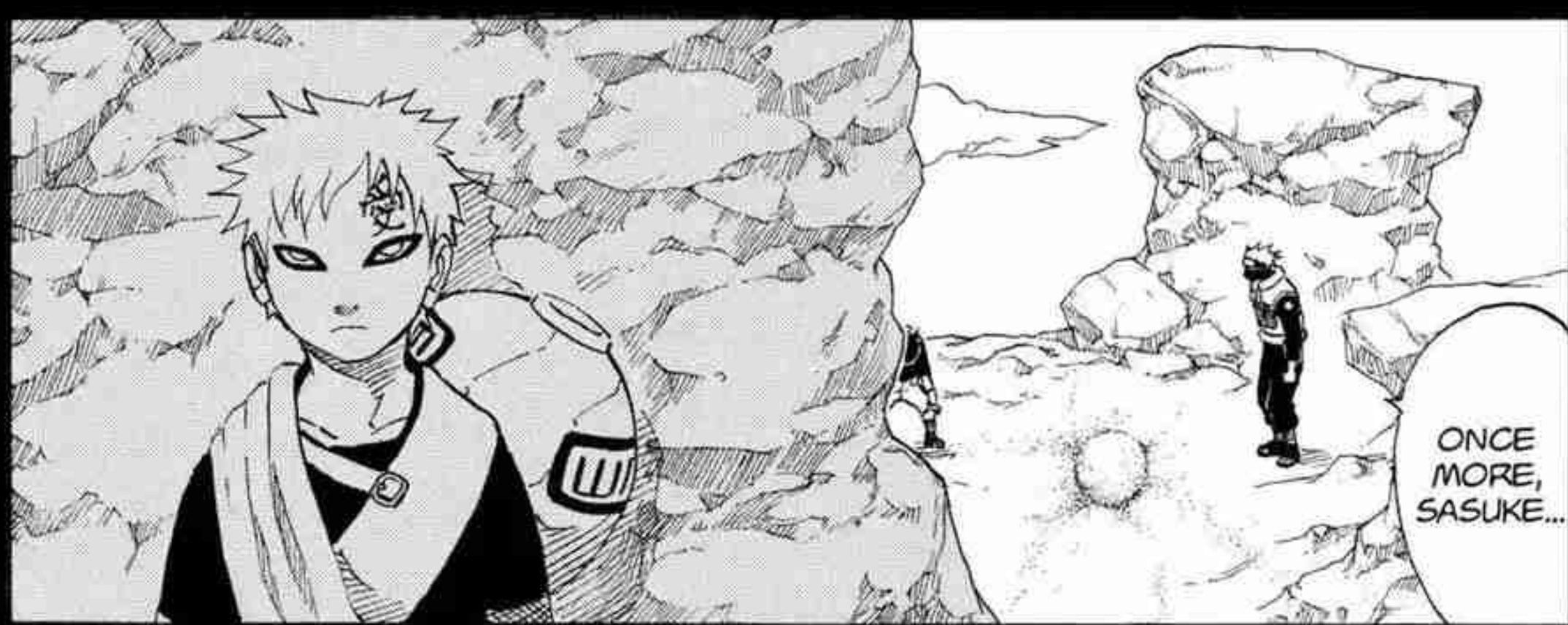
THIS IS WEIRD... KNOWING SASUKE, I FIGURED HE'D BE HERE EVEN IF HE HAD TO CRAWL...
HM!

...



TCH
TCH

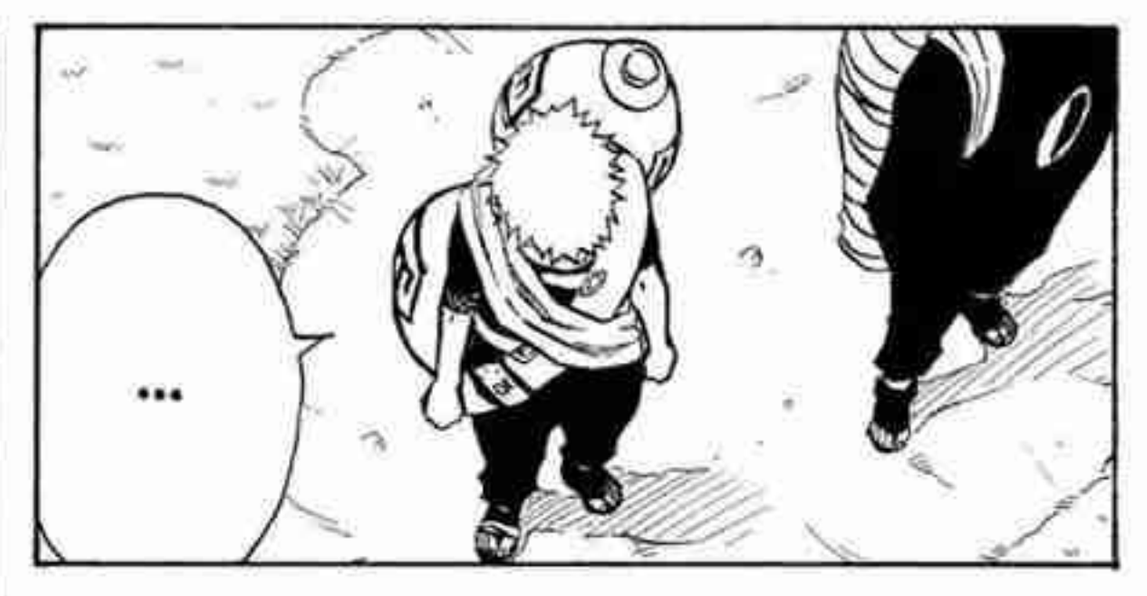


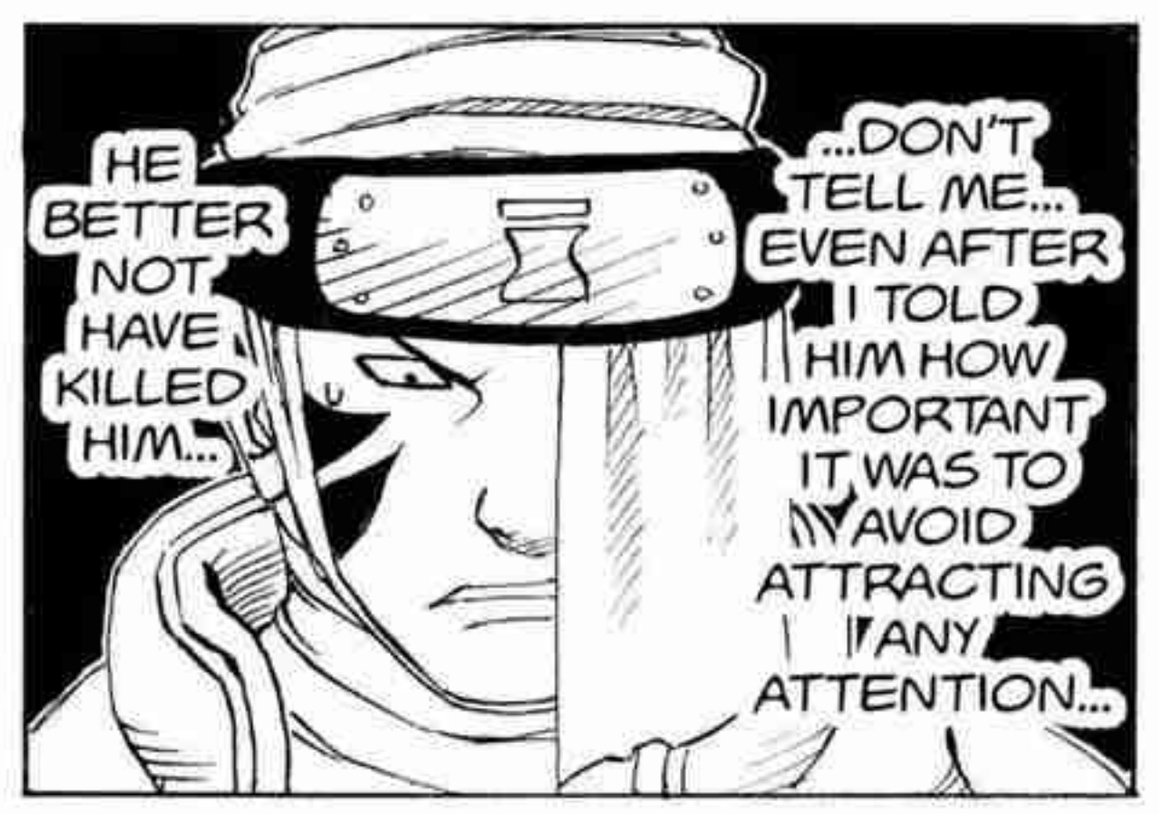

ONCE MORE, SASUKE...

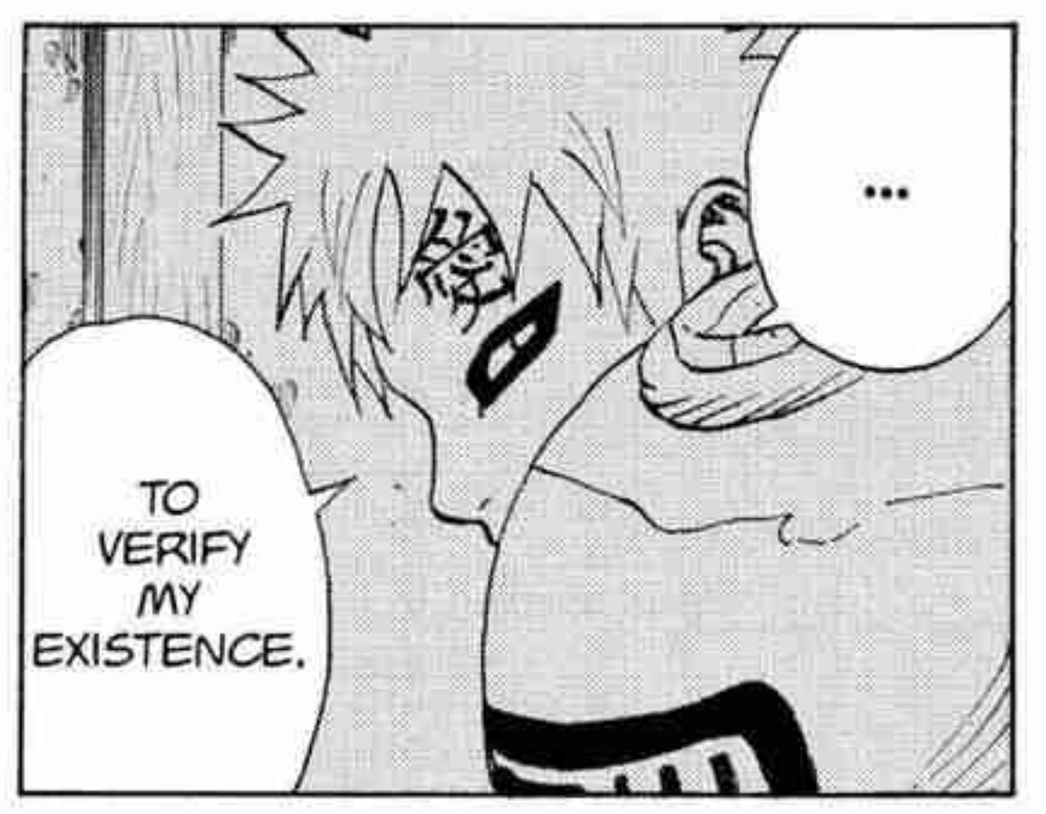
CLENCH
TWITCH

HERE I COME!
HUF
HUF

READ THIS WAY
...WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

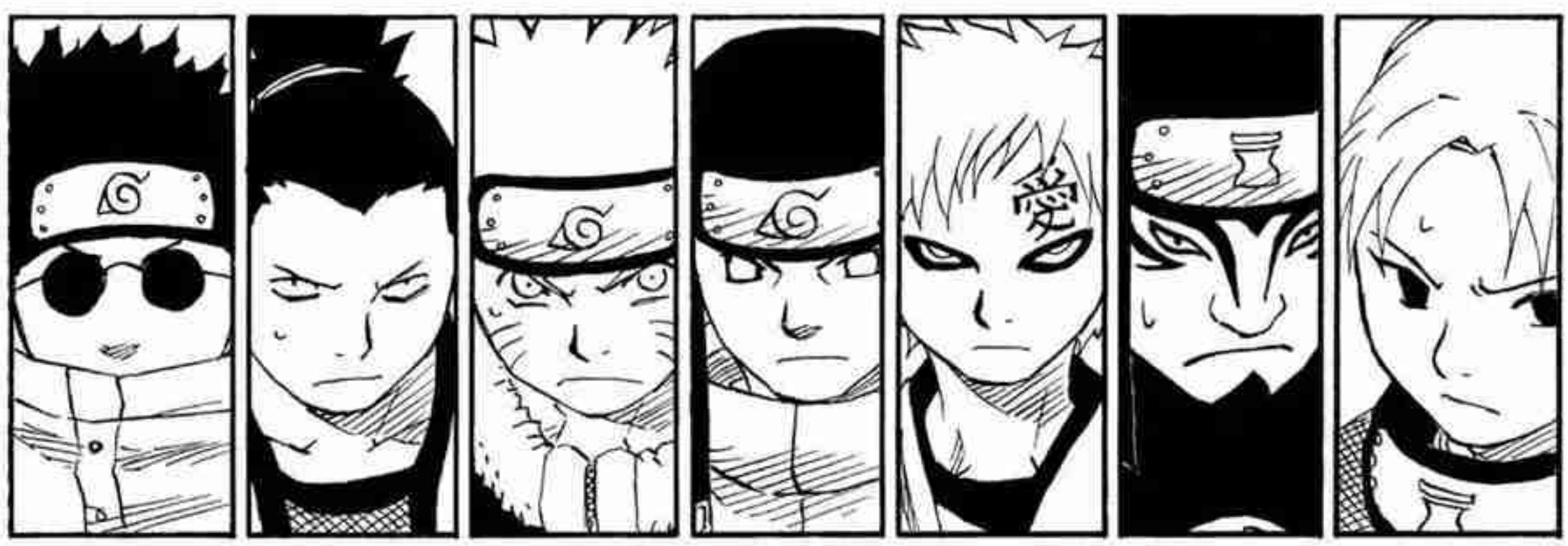

...

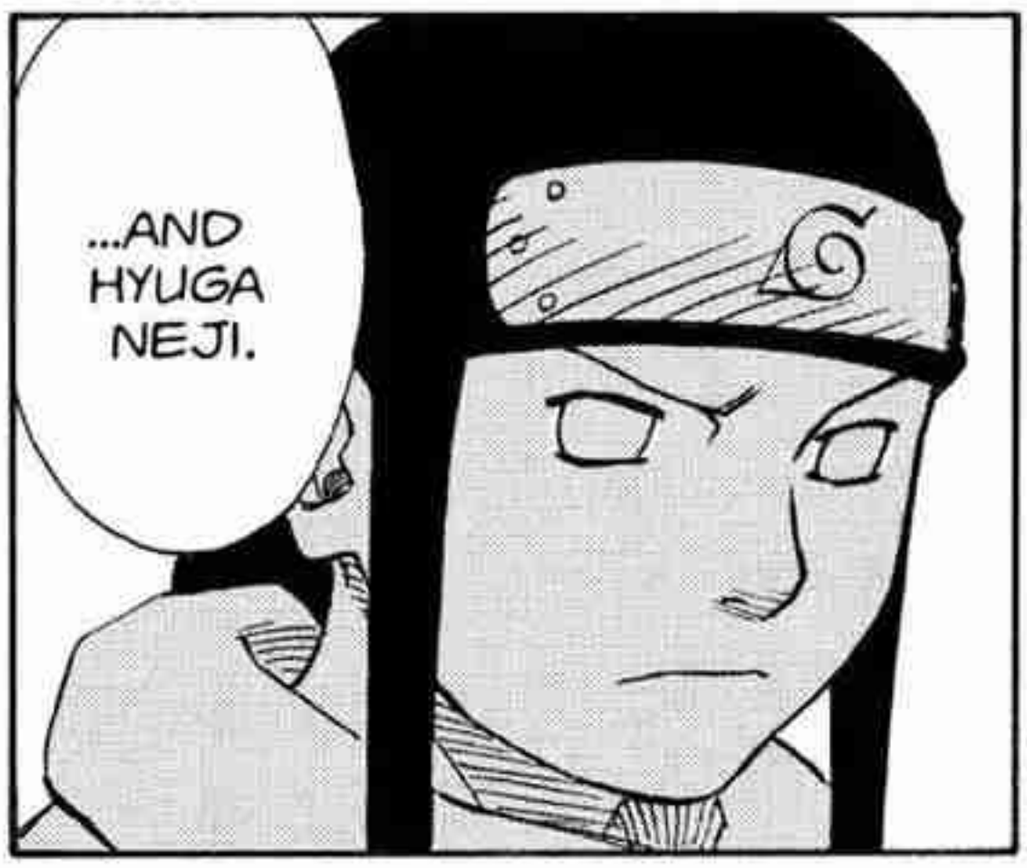

HE BETTER NOT HAVE KILLED HIM...
...DON'T TELL ME... EVEN AFTER I TOLD HIM HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO AVOID ATTRACTING ANY ATTENTION...


...
TO VERIFY MY EXISTENCE.

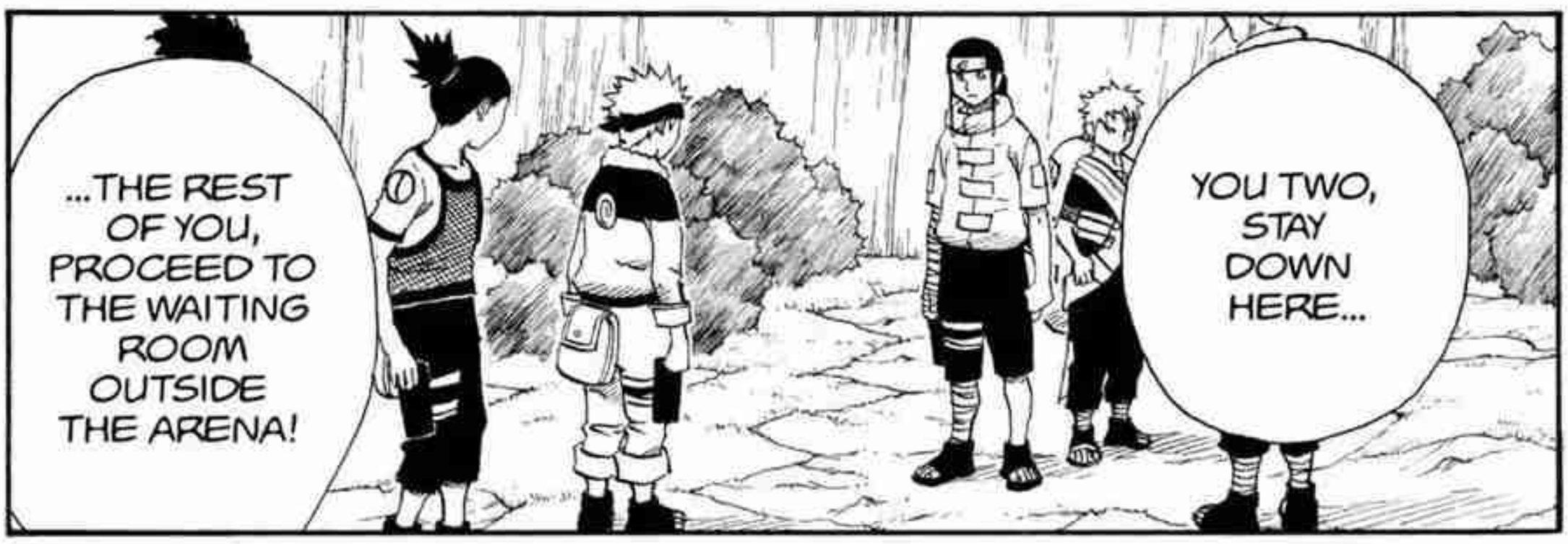
THIS IS THE LAST EXAM.

LISTEN UP, ALL OF YOU.




...AND HYUGA NEJI.

ALL RIGHT THEN... MATCH ONE, UZUMAKI NARUTO...


...THE REST OF YOU, PROCEED TO THE WAITING ROOM OUTSIDE THE ARENA!
YOU TWO, STAY DOWN HERE...

HEY HINATA, THERE ARE TWO SEATS OVER HERE!

SHF
SHF
TH-THANKS.

...BUT AGAINST NEJI, NARUTO HASN'T GOT A CHANCE...

THIS'LL BE QUITE A SHOW!
...NARUTO...

SHF SHF

...HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED BY NOW.

HMM... BUT ALL THE ONES WHO WERE HANGING ON THROUGH LUCK ALONE...

...I NEVER IMAGINED THAT SCAMP WOULD LAST SO LONG...

WHINE! WOOF!
WHAT...?!

WHINE!
LICK

WHAT IS IT, AKAMARU?

WHERE...?

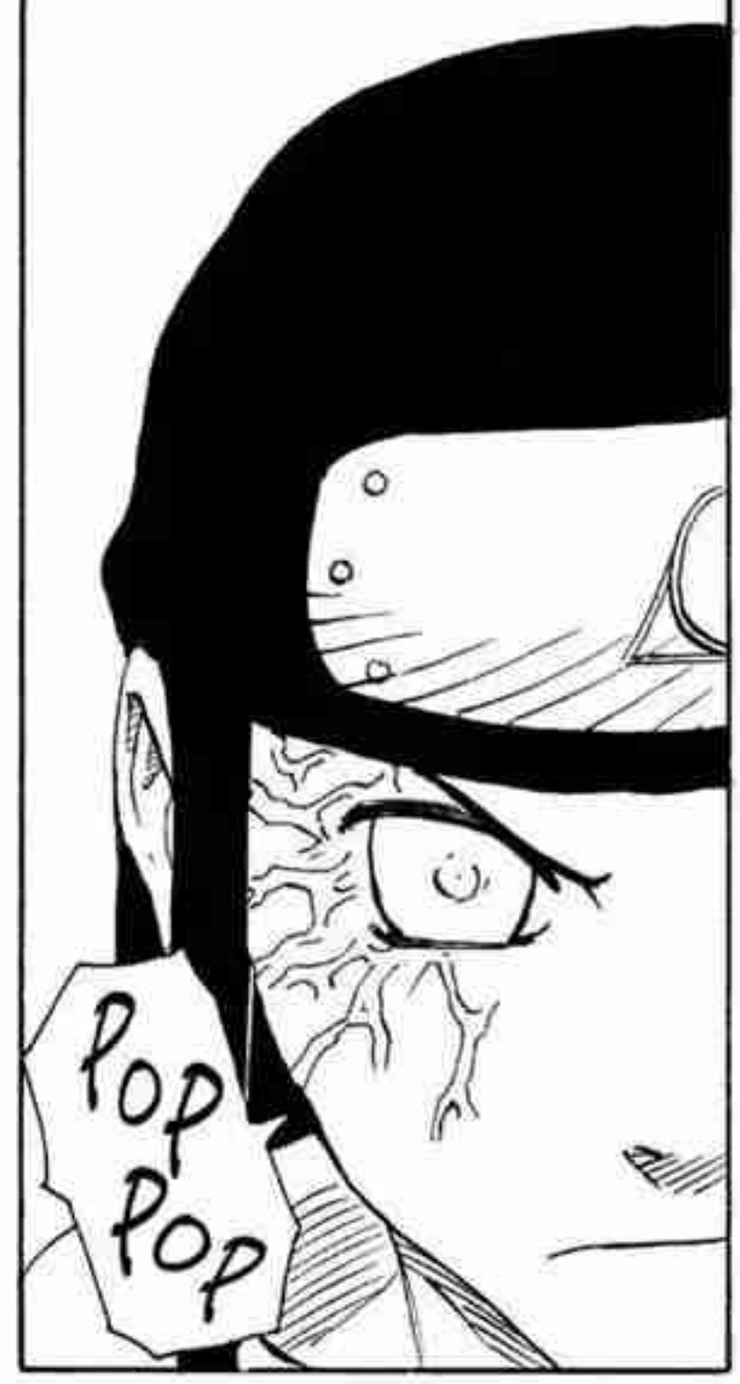
WHY THE HECK ARE THERE BLACK OPS AGENTS HERE?

...OVER THERE...!!

...IS SOMETHING BIG ABOUT TO HAPPEN...?!

READ THIS WAY
YOU GOT SOME-THING TO SAY...?
...
...
I'VE SAID THIS ONCE BEFORE...
SHF
I VOW TO WIN!!

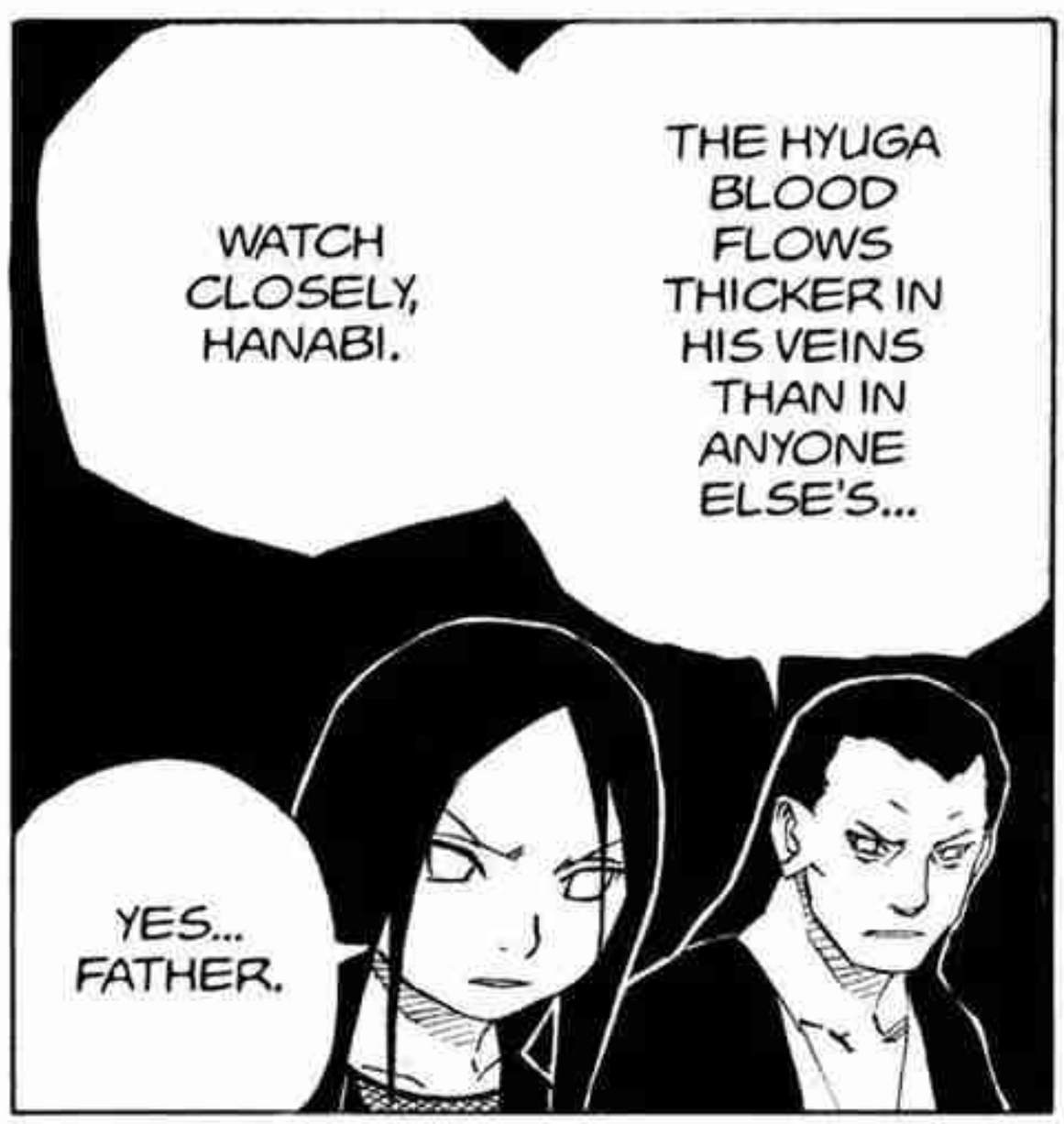
...AS IF HE HASN'T GOT A SINGLE DOUBT...
...HE HAS ABSOLUTE FAITH IN HIMSELF...

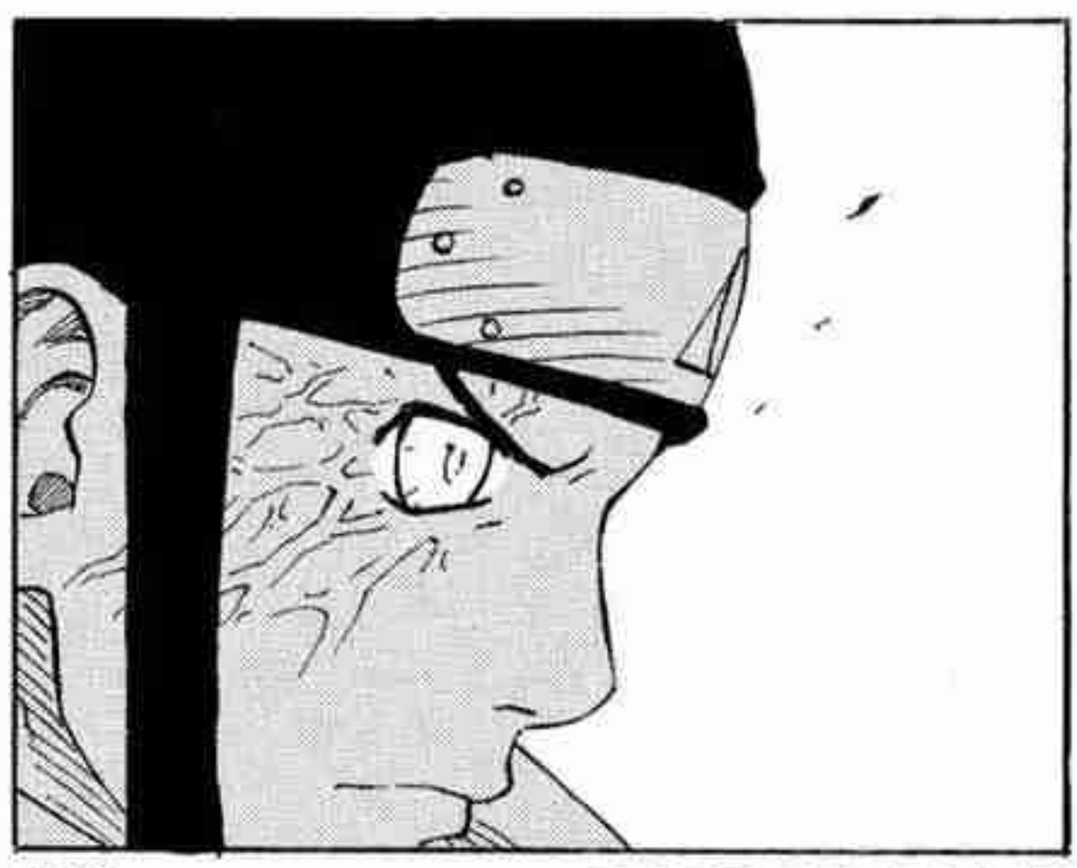

POP POP

BEGIN!!
NOW THEN... MATCH ONE...

LET'S FIGHT!!
QUIT YAPPING...

CROUCH
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE DESPAIR IN YOUR EYES... WHEN THE TRUTH FINALLY DAWNS ON YOU...
HO HO... IT'S MORE FUN THIS WAY ANYWAY...





TO BE CONTINUED IN NARUTO VOL. 12!